

Israel trying to isolate Jerusalem — secret report

MADRID (AFP) — Israel wants to "isolate" the Palestinians in Arab east Jerusalem to enhance its control over the city, according to the El Pais daily which cited a secret EU report. Ambassadors and consuls from the 15 European Union countries (EU) concluded in the report written Jan. 28 that Israel's intention was to "modify the status" of Jerusalem in order to "reinforce its sovereignty." According to El Pais, the report entitled Jerusalem Watch branded Israel's actions as "unacceptable." Publication of the report was "vetted" by Germany which, "because of its had consequence historically," tries to soft-pedal criticism of the Netanyahu government. El Pais reported, Israel's policy of new settlements inside Jerusalem and in the immediate vicinity is aimed at surrounding the Palestinian population to cut it off and isolate it, the report was quoted as saying.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

Turkey welcomes Iraq deal, Cem to visit this week

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem on Monday welcomed the U.N.-Iraq deal over weapons inspections and said he would visit Jordan this week to propose regional cooperation for a permanent solution. "Turkey welcomes... the agreement between Iraq and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan," MR. Cem said in a statement. "If a deal had not been reached, Turkey in particular would have been damaged economically." Mr. Cem said later at a news conference. Mr. Cem also said he would travel to Amman on Thursday to discuss the Middle East with King Hussein and other Jordanian officials. He gave no further details.

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King welcomes U.N.-Iraqi accord, hopes next stage would end sanctions

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein welcomed the U.N.-Iraqi agreement which was signed in Baghdad Monday by U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, expressing hope that the agreement will contribute to a permanent solution for ending the Iraqi people's suffering.

In an interview with Jordan Television, King Hussein said: "Thank God, I was optimistic and my optimism proved to be right. We have followed up on this issue since the beginning and we have exerted efforts with all the concerned parties, including our brothers in Iraq. Today the U.N. secretary general called me after his press conference in Baghdad and thanked Jordan and expressed his appreciation of our stand."

"He gave me the impression that everything was moving in the right direction. I hope that this will be the end of the tense atmosphere in which we have lived. I think we have to further pursue efforts and make contacts with the parties directly involved in this case so that we can move on from this stage to the next, when everything agreed on has been implemented. Then the focus should be on ending the sanctions," the King said.

"I hope the agreement will get [Iraqis] out of the dark tunnel into a new dawn in which they will live free in their homeland." His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan also welcomed the agreement. The Crown Prince met Mr. Kofi Annan, who yesterday stopped in Amman on his way to Paris from Baghdad, where he signed the agreement with the Iraqi government.

In statements to Jordan News Agency, Petra, and Jordan Television after the meeting, which was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani, Prince Hassan said: "The purpose of my coming to the airport [to receive Mr. Annan] was to reiterate what His Majesty said by the phone to the secretary general, [which is] our appreciation of, and admiration for his efforts."

"I would like to say how much we appreciate this very timely initiative at this very critical moment," Prince Hassan said. "The efforts of Mr. Annan enjoy the appreciation of His Majesty" whom Mr. Annan called this morning after signing the agreement with the Iraqi government, the Crown Prince said.

Mr. Annan and the Iraqi government will be observed and that there will not be a new crisis in the future. Prince Hassan said Mr. Annan did not inform him of the details of the agreement, which are "a direct issue of direct concern" between the secretary general and the Security Council.

"Our hope is that... we will be talking in terms of not only the medium term, but the long term of a gradual ending of the suffering of the Iraqi people and, indeed, a commitment to a state system based on international legality in this broader Middle East region," the Crown Prince said.

Prince Hassan expressed hopes for breakthroughs in other issues in the region because "we are talking about the stability and

(Continued on page 3)

Clinton, Chirac accept agreement, say 'it should be enforced as soon as possible'

Annan: Agreement contains reference to the lifting of seven-year sanctions, mentions need to respect Iraqi sovereignty, dignity and national security, which is expected to lead to less heavy-handed methods by UNSCOM

Combined agency dispatches

U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton and French President Jacques Chirac late Monday gave their backing to the deal struck in Baghdad by U.N. chief Kofi Annan on U.N. arms inspections in Iraq, Mr. Chirac's spokeswoman said.

The two presidents agreed that the accord seemed "to completely conform with the resolutions of the [U.N.] Security Council and is in line with the recommendations made by the Council's five permanent members," spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said.

She said the two leaders had agreed that the signed accord should be "enforced as soon as possible."

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Chirac had spoken on the telephone for more than half an hour, she said.

The accord lays down guidelines for a new U.N. inspection regime for Iraqi presidential sites, sources close to the talks said Monday.

Mr. Annan, meanwhile said the two-page memorandum of understanding, reached after he had a two-hour private meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, contained a reference to the lifting of seven-year sanctions.

The document also mentions the need to respect Iraqi sovereignty, dignity and national security, which is expected to lead to less heavy-handed methods by the U.N. weapons inspectors searching for suspected concealed weapons of mass destruction.

But Mr. Annan was asked by CNN when he left Baghdad whether he had reached an understanding with the Iraqi leadership that he would work towards an early lifting of the sanctions.

Mr. Annan replied that "the lifting of the sanctions is not in my hands, this is an issue for the [U.N. Security] Council. But there is a reference in the document to that issue."

The U.N. secretary general, who arrived in Paris late Monday, sharply criticized Mr. Annan's original proposal to have the value of its partial oil exports boosted by about 160 per cent, saying it did not include means for Iraq to increase capacity, but stopped short of rejecting it.

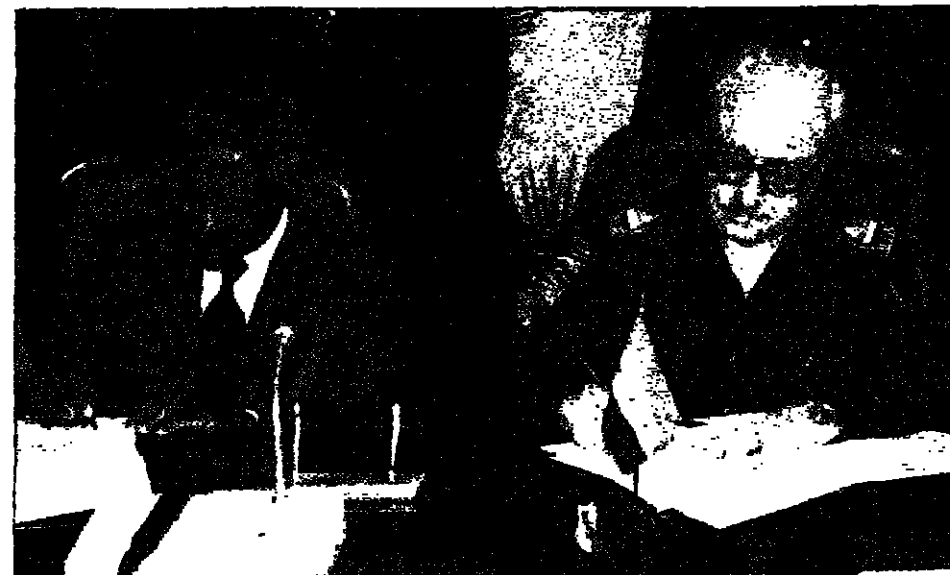
Mr. Falt said Mr. Annan had a meeting with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and senior aides on the issue as well as a separate meeting with Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan.

The humanitarian scheme, first launched in December 1996, bypasses U.N. trade sanctions on Iraq imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The sanctions include a ban on oil export's, Iraq's lifeblood, which can only be lifted when U.N. weapons inspectors certify that Baghdad has eliminated its long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

It is not clear what ceiling Iraq will use for its oil plan since it has made clear that the figure of \$5.2 billion is beyond its current oil export capacity.

Iraq has proposed \$4 billion.



U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz sign an agreement aimed at defusing a crisis over weapons inspections on Monday (Reuters photo)

Monday en route for New York, has declined to make the full details of the accord public until he has presented the text to the Security Council for approval on Wednesday.

His spokesman Fred Eckhardt also declined comment on the agreement's specifics, but told reporters that "there's a reference to some kind of an effort to complete the process and then lift the sanctions."

But "there's not a promise to lift sanctions," Mr. Eckhardt said.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and U.N. Ambassador Bill Richardson began combing through the agreement Monday to determine whether it meets U.S. demands.

U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said the agreement, signed earlier in the day in Baghdad would be thoroughly examined to assess whether U.N. weapons inspectors will be given full and unconditional access to suspected weapons sites.

"The president's advisers, Secretary Albright are taking the time to go through this, discuss it so that we will see whether indeed it is a real solution," Mr. Rubin said.

Ms. Albright was briefed by Mr. Richardson who received a copy of the

agreement at an earlier meeting of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council in New York.

"The process by which this agreement is examined and, if it's sufficient, implemented is a lengthy one," Mr. Rubin said.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Monday that a United Nations Security Council resolution was needed to set the seal on an accord with President Hussein on inspection of presidential sites.

He told journalists at Downing Street: "In addition [to the accord with U.N. secretary general], we have to have a Security Council resolution that makes it absolutely clear we are not going to be back in this position, playing the same game in two or three months' time."

According to a Kremlin announcement cited by the Interfax news agency Monday, Russia and the United States are to jointly draft a U.N. Security Council resolution on Iraq following the accord. The decision was taken during a telephone conversation between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Mr. Clinton, Kremlin spokesman Sergei Yastrebinsky said the foreign ministers of the two countries, Ms. Albright and Yevgeny Primakov, would hold talks on the initiative.

The five U.N. Security Council members with veto power met Monday but were not expected to discuss details of an accord that could end a U.S. standoff with Iraq, diplomats said.

Chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler will probably return to Baghdad at the beginning of next week, Mr. Annan said Monday.

Mr. Annan said that if the U.N. Security Council approved the deal on arms inspections that he signed with Mr. Aziz Monday, he hoped Mr. Butler would return to continue his talks with Mr. Aziz on March 2.

"I hope he is going to come back on March 2 to have, to continue his discussions with Mr. Tariq Aziz and move on with the work," he told CNN.

Mr. Annan said that he understood that Mr. Butler was one of the officials from the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) Iraq had had most difficulty with.

"Although there has been some misunderstanding with UNSCOM, there has been some difficult relationship with Butler, he is a competent person who has done quite a lot of work under very difficult and

(Continued on page 7)

Majali defends decision to ban pro-Iraqi rallies

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Monday defended his government's controversial ban on pro-Iraqi rallies saying Jordan was forced to take tough decisions in order to maintain stability and prevent possible outbreaks of violence.

At least one Jordanian was killed and over 20 injured during two days of riots, which flared after Friday's noon prayers, in the southern town of Ma'an. Officials said the army and police had seized a substantial number of weapons in the city, which has been placed under curfew since the early hours of Sunday.

"We are extremely fearful that demonstrations could be infiltrated by enemies of Jordan," the premier told the Upper House [Senate] during its session yesterday. "There are enemies of this country, of its unity, its freedom and its democracy."

He said such "enemies" could take advantage of public demonstrations to serve their ill intentions. Dr. Majali said his government had information about these infiltrators and had recently arrested a man who planned to throw a bomb during one of the rallies in order to turn demonstrators

and police against each other. "We know of underground parties that call for the overthrow of the regime," the prime minister said without elaborating.

The government blamed the president of the Jordan Engineers' Association, Leith Shbeilat, for instigating the riots. He was arrested in the early hours of Friday while returning from Ma'an, after delivering a night sermon.

"After failing to incite people in Tiflich, [Mr. Shbeilat] went to Ma'an, performed the evening prayer, gave a sermon that instigated the people and asked them to combat the Zionist government and regime, and then ran away," Dr. Majali told the House.

In a statement issued on Feb. 10, the government banned all public demonstrations and warned the Islamist-led opposition parties, which include pan-Arabists and leftists, that it was ready to take measures in order to ensure the decision was enforced.

Two days after the statement was issued, the prime minister met with opposition party leaders, who were planning a pro-Iraq rally in downtown Amman for the following day (Friday). Dr. Majali told the Senate that he "was saddened by the threatening and arrogant tone [used by opposition leaders], who insisted that they

were going to proceed with the rally whether the government liked it or not."

The opposition defied the ban and attempted to stage the demonstration after Friday prayers. But police foiled the attempt and arrested more than 60 people.

"What was really said, is that the organizers took the decision to demonstrate, set a time for that and decided to go ahead with the procession despite the government's decision," Dr. Majali said.

In a statement issued by the Senate on Monday, the House condemned the recent incidents which "disrupted the country's peace and stability" and emphasized the need to preserve its security.

"We stress the importance of maintaining Jordan's security and stability... and putting an end to attempts that incite sedition, spread chaos and tamper with the security of the Kingdom and its main priorities," the statement said.

The Senate, meanwhile, referred to its judiciary committee two draft laws regulating pharmaceutical associations and military pension. It also referred to its financial committee the draft customs law and a draft 1997 law covering an oil exploration agreement between the Natural Resources Authority and a foreign firm.

Iraq, U.N. to start aid distribution plan for expanded oil deal

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq and the United Nations have agreed to work on a new food distribution plan to handle the proposed increase in the so-called oil-for-food deal, a U.N. official said Monday.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan met with senior Iraqi officials to discuss the issue outside of the pressing talks aimed at defusing the standoff on U.N. weapons inspections, said Eric Falt, the U.N. spokesman in Iraq.

"Both parties have agreed to rapidly start discussing preparation of a new distribution plan," Mr. Falt said.

Iraq has not yet accepted a Security Council resolution allowing it to boost value of its oil exports to \$5.2 billion from the current \$2 billion.

Mr. Falt declined to say whether Iraq's participation in the discussions amounted to formal Iraqi approval of the new plan.

Iraq sharply criticized Mr. Annan's original proposal to have the value of its partial oil exports boosted by about 160 per cent, saying it did not include means for Iraq to increase capacity, but stopped short of rejecting it.

Mr. Falt said Mr. Annan had a meeting with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and senior aides on the issue as well as a separate meeting with Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan.

The humanitarian scheme, first launched in December 1996, bypasses U.N. trade sanctions on Iraq imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The sanctions include a ban on oil export's, Iraq's lifeblood, which can only be lifted when U.N. weapons inspectors certify that Baghdad has eliminated its long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

It is not clear what ceiling Iraq will use for its oil plan since it has made clear that the figure of \$5.2 billion is beyond its current oil export capacity.

Iraq has proposed \$4 billion.

After only two and a half months at office Judicial Council sends Kilani retirement notice

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In an unprecedented move, the Judicial Council yesterday served council president, Judge Farouk Kilani, with notice that he would be subjected to early retirement effective today, after only two and a half months in office.

A three-line statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the council took the decision unanimously.

Judge Kilani, who also headed the Court of Cassation, told the Jordan Times yesterday he believes he was removed because there is a contention in the government that he played a role in overturning in January the controversial temporary amendments to the 1993 Press and Publica-

tions Law and for attempting to reform the judiciary which he considers lacking in independence.

"I deny that the [Higher Council's] decision [to retire me] was taken unanimously," he said in an interview with the Jordan Times. "The obvious reasons for this decision are connected to the High Court's ruling in January concerning the press and publications law, the enactment of which was found unconstitutional."

The High Court of Justice in January revoked the amendments to the law — which forced the closure of 13 newspapers late last year — on the grounds that their enactment in May 1997 as temporary legislation was unconstitutional.

Judge Kilani was appointed as chief of the High

Court of Justice in August, and still retained that office when the weekly newspapers filed a suit against the government for violating the constitution in enacting the amendments.

The High Court was scheduled to rule on the case in November, but the decision was postponed twice due to the absence of several of the court's judges. Judge Kilani told the Jordan Times then that during the postponement, he wrote his own opinion, which he passed on to a higher judicial committee for review. On Dec. 5, 1997, he was promoted to both the presidency of the Higher Judicial Council and the Court of Cassation. The judicial committee passed his opinion back to

(Continued on page 3)

Jordanians in Baghdad hold pro-Iraq rally

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A delegation of Jordanians who travelled to Iraq in a show of solidarity staged a demonstration Monday supporting Iraq against U.S. threats, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) said.

They marched to the headquarters of the U.N. Development Programme and gave a protest letter to the U.N. representative there. "denouncing U.S. threats and the unfair embargo" imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in 1990, the agency said.

The delegation of 350 Jordanian intellectuals, cultural figures and union members came Sunday at the invitation of Iraq's ruling Baath Party "to express the Jordanian people's support for the Iraqi people and their leadership," INA said.

Attackers kill 13 shepherds, train bombing leaves 18 dead in Algeria

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Thirteen shepherds were killed by armed groups, and two bomb explosions damaged a gas pipeline in weekend attacks across Algeria, according to newspaper reports Monday.

Twelve shepherds, aged 15-65, had their throats slit late Saturday night near Tialet, 240 kilometres south of Algiers, the newspapers Le Matin and Liberte, both non-government owned, reported.

Liberte said another shepherd was found dead, also with his throat slit, on Sunday near Chlef, 150 kilometres southwest of Algiers.

Meanwhile, 18 people were killed and 25 others wounded in a bomb attack on a train travelling from Algiers to Al Affroun, the Algerian security services said in a statement.

The blast took place in Boufarik, 30 kilometres south of the capital, the statement said. No other

details were immediately available.

The attack followed two other bomb blasts last week aimed at soldiers, which killed some 50 persons, according to press figures.

In other violence, two bombings late Saturday damaged a gas pipeline connecting gas fields in the Hassi M'el region with a refinery at Arzew, on the western coast of Algeria.

Around 100 metres of pipeline near Tialet were

damaged by the bombings, the newspapers reported.

No one claimed responsibility for the attacks. But suspicion normally falls on Islamists fighting a six-year-old insurgency against the military-backed government.

The Islamist insurgency has left an estimated 75,000 people dead since 1992, when the government cancelled legislative elections the Islamic Salvation Front was tipped to win.

Official Pakistani explanation of murders 'insufficient' — Iranian FM

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said Monday that official Pakistani explanations of the weekend killings of two Iranians in Karachi were "insufficient."

"Pakistan's explanations are not sufficient and what matters to us the most is finding out what really happened and trying to bring the terrorists," Mr. Kharazi stressed on Iranian television.

The two victims, Iranian construction engineers Ali Mohammad Habib Zadeh, 36, and Murtaza Adib Zadeh, 48, were supervising work on a flyover in the Pakistani port city of Karachi when they were shot dead Saturday.

Three people attacked the engineers at their work site and fled on two motorbikes, police and witnesses said.

The two victims worked for the Iranian company Machine Sazi Arak Iran, which also employs three other Iranians and 25 Pakistanis.

The Pakistani ambassador here, Javid Hussein, was summoned to the Iranian foreign ministry Saturday, hours after the engineers were slain.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Amintzadeh "protested that Pakistani officials are not serious in pursuing and punishing culprits for such incidents and demanded an explanation," IRNA said.

"We are concerned that Pakistan has been turned into an unsafe place for Iranian nationals and urge Pakistani officials to seriously review the means by which they confront the culprits," he said.

In September, five Iranian air force personnel were gunned down in the Pakistani city of Rawalpindi. An underground Sunni extremist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Muslim sectarian violence in Pakistan involving activists from the majority Sunni Muslim and minority Shiite Muslim communities has claimed more than 200 lives since early last year.

Netanyahu aide says protests prove Arafat wants to destroy Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A top Israeli government official said Monday that recent Palestinian pro-Israeli demonstrations proved that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat hopes to destroy Israel.

"Certain Arab countries, as well as the Palestinian Authority, want to destroy Israel," said David Bar-Illan, a senior aide to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The pro-Israeli protests "organised by the Palestinian Authority," which called on the Arab state, to rain Scud missiles on Tel Aviv, were proof, Mr. Bar-Illan told AFP.

"The charter of the PLO that calls for the destruction of Israel has not been amended and, in addition, Palestinian media habitually puts out provocative messages of anti-semitism," Mr. Bar-Illan told AFP.

The Palestinian National Authority sought to put down the demonstrations of solidarity with Iraq in the territories so as not to upset the United States and in an attempt to prevent criticism by Israel.

Palestinian police have recently closed a total of eight television and radio stations for broadcasting pro-Iraqi material.

The Israeli government insists that the Palestinians amend the parts of the Palestine Liberation Organisation charter of 1968 that call for the destruction of Israel.

Arafat says focus moves to Middle East peacemaking

GAZA (R) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat welcomed the apparent end of Iraq's crisis with the United Nations over weapons inspections on Monday, saying it would free world attention to work on Middle East peace-making.

Hundreds of Palestinian students staged rallies hailing a U.N.-Iraq deal sealed in Baghdad as a victory for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

They burned Israeli, U.S. and British flags in protests that defied a Palestinian National Authority (PNA) ban.

Two Palestinian schoolchildren were slightly wounded when Israeli troops fired rubber bullets and teargas in the West Bank town of Hebron after about 500 students blocked the town's main road with burning tyres and rocks.

"We were lucky to hear the good news that reached us from Baghdad on the agreement," Mr. Arafat told reporters in Palestinian-ruled Gaza. "We welcome the agreement between Mr. Kofi Annan and the Iraqi officials. It was a very successful step and we appreciate it very much. It is a very important start to achieve real peace and to avoid any military activity."

Mr. Annan, the U.N. secretary general, said on Monday he had concluded an agree-

ment with Iraq on the dispute and hoped the deal would be acceptable to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Arafat said the apparent end of Iraq's standoff with the United Nations would boost efforts to resolve the 11-month-old impasse in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

"No doubt the stress on the peace process will be increased at all levels by all means," Mr. Arafat said. "We are ready to do all we can for the sake of rescuing the peace process and moving it forward."

Senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told Reuters: "We're really relieved as Palestinians that the Gulf crisis is over. We hope attention and focus will return again to the revival of the peace process."

Mr. Arafat had called on Iraq to abide by U.N. resolutions but said he was opposed to the use of force to end the standoff.

Palestinian officials had complained the Iraqi crisis was drawing attention away from what they called Israel's foot-dragging on implementing peace agreements and had dominated the attention of the United States, the main peace sponsor.

Peace talks collapsed last March when Israel broke ground for a new Jewish set-



Iraqi workers Monday watch a joint press conference on television given by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz in Baghdad. Mr. Annan announced that he reached an agreement with the Iraqi government which aims at solving a crisis over Iraq's weapons inspections (Reuters photo)

Iraq hails inspection deal as victory for Baghdad, U.N., setback for U.S.

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq on Monday hailed the agreement on U.N. weapons inspections as a victory for Baghdad and the United Nations but a setback for the United States and its "law of the jungle."

"Iraqi Television broadcast footage of the signing of the agreement by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz and described the accord as a 'new victory' for President Saddam Hussein."

Mr. Annan and Mr. Aziz were seen in the Iraqi Television coverage sitting at a table signing the accord at the foreign ministry here, and then standing and warmly shaking hands while officials applauded.

"This agreement came in the wake of lengthy and intensive talks between Iraq and the United Nations and after the victorious President Saddam Hussein received U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan," Iraqi television said.

"Both sides discussed all the issues and problems invented by the U.S. administration to

Lunch, tea for Annan in Iraqi presidential palaces

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan ate lunch in a presidential palace and had tea in another before leaving here Monday at the end of his peace mission, the official Iraqi news agency INA said.

"Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz accompanied Kofi Annan on a tour of presidential palaces in the countryside near Baghdad," the agency said.

"The guest lunched in one palace and then went to another where he had tea on one of the balconies," it said. INA did not specify whether the two palaces Mr. Annan visited were among those at the centre of a dispute between the Iraqi authorities and members of the U.N. Special Commission on disarmament.

over reason," Babel said.

"But the growing opposition to this logic among most permanent Security Council members and other countries and the will of the world community, which rejects recourse to force, were stronger than the law of the American jungle," it said.

Babel was the only Iraqi newspaper to report and comment on the deal, which was announced late Sunday after three days of talks here by Mr. Annan.

The crisis erupted four months ago when Iraq refused to allow U.N. weapons inspectors to enter presidential sites on grounds of sovereignty.

Mr. Annan said the deal allows for free and unfettered access to so-called presidential sites for the inspectors, in line with U.N. Security Council demands.

The United States said it still wants to study the agreement before it withdraws the threat of military force.

Aziz gives British journalist history lesson

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz stung Monday by a British journalist asking whether Baghdad could be trusted to keep its promises, hit back with a history lesson about Britain's dealings in the Middle East.

"In the history of the Arab World since the World War I until now, it was the British that cannot be trusted," Mr. Aziz said at a joint news conference with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan after the signing of an agreement on U.N. weapons inspections.

"The successive British governments did not commit themselves to the promises they made to the Arab nations," Mr. Aziz added, in response to a British journalist who asked if the Iraqi government could be trusted to keep its commitments.

"[British governments] backed down against the commitments [they] gave to the Arabs, including the Iraqis. They changed their policies. They did not respect their commitments," he added.

Mr. Aziz was referring to

correspondence between the British high commissioner in Cairo, Sir Henry McMahon, and Sharif Hussein, ruler of Mecca between July 1915 and March 1916.

In a letter dated Oct. 24, 1915, McMahon undertook to guarantee, in the name of the British government, support and recognition for Arab independence within the limits demanded by the prophet's descendant in Mecca if Sharif Hussein, who led an Arab revolt against the Turks, would help the armies.

Sharif Hussein declared

war on the Ottomans in June 1916 but the British assurances were made void by the British-French Sykes-Picot accord of 1916 in which the two countries agreed to divide up the Ottoman Empire among themselves.

Britain's Balfour Declaration of Nov. 2, 1917, which promised the Jews a "national home" in Palestine, was seen by many Arabs as a betrayal of their cause.

Iraq, whose boundaries were determined by Britain, was under British mandate from 1920 to 1932.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:10Cartoon — C.R.O.
16:30 French programme —
Conans
17:00The Medical Magazine
18:00Small Talk
18:30Border Town
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Educational Programme
19:30News Headlines
19:35What Would You Do?
21:10Acapolo Bay
22:00News in English
22:30 Feature Film — "Dark Heritage"
23:59Metro Cafe
00:30End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:48Fajr
06:06(Sunrise) Duha
11:49Dhuhr
15:01Asr
17:32Maghreb
18:49Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624990
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 624853/624811
St. Abram Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, and winds southeasterly moderate, in Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Amman04/17

Aqaba11/25
Deserts03/18
Jordan Valley10/25

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 17, Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 26 per cent, Aqaba 20 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Tawfiq Qurbaian623029
Dr. Ghaleb Zawiadeh736011
Dr. Hisham Kan'an790286
Dr. Khalidun Asfour832600
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asena pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir787770
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad985550

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Dept5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs5661101
Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority5680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity644281/6
Akileh Maternity642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Mushar Hospital 5667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 5666126/57
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir775111/26
Army, Marita891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital

5602340/50

Amal Hospital5674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)800560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)86732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital(02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15Aqaba (add) (RJ)
07:15Sanaa (RJ)
07:25Damascus (RJ)
09:25Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)

10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

16:20Cairo (RJ)
17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:30London, Frankfurt (RJ)
Other Flights
14:35Istanbul (TK)
14:40Munich (YP)
16:30Rome (AZ)
18:30Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:00Tel Aviv (LY)
20:10Beirut (ME)
20:40Cairo (MS)
22:20London (BA)
23:35Amsterdam (KL)
23:35Larnaca (CY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

07:45Aqaba (RW)
09:05Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20Aqaba (RW)
22:50Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00Aqaba (add) (RJ)

06:20Beirut (RJ)
08:25Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:30Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:30Cairo (RJ)
19:30Jeddah (RJ)
20:20Larnaca (RJ)
20:40Damascus (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights

02:25Amsterdam (KL)
03:00Athens (OA)
15:40Munich (YP)
15:45Istanbul (TK)
17:30Amman (AZ)
19:30Dubai (EK)
21:20Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

06:45Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15Aqaba (RW)
09:30Amman (QAIA) (RW)
17:45Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50Aqaba (RW)



Sharifa Zein meets with the press to discuss next month's planned badia exhibition in London (Petra photo)

Badia research programme plans exhibition next month in London

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Badia Research and Development Programme (JBRDP) will next month begin "exporting" badia culture and heritage to England via a ten-day exhibition.

The exhibition, "The Badia Comes to London — A Celebration of Culture, Heritage and Art," will go on display at the Royal Geographical Society in London beginning March 16 and will be accompanied on March 23 by lectures from both JBRDP Director Mohammad Shahbaz and his British counterpart Rodrick Dutton. The pair will lecture on the badia research programme's achievements and its future plans for developing the region.

The project is under the dual patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and the Duke of Kent. As such, the programme not only enjoys support from the Higher Council for Science and

Technology in Amman, but the U.K.'s Royal Geographical Society, in cooperation with Durham University's Centre for Overseas Research and Development.

"What we have is a golden opportunity to enhance our research through this exhibition," said Sharifa Zein, public relations director for the project. "It gives us a better chance to develop a plan that is vast and that incorporates environmentally sound development in this region."

"Most people don't realise that the badia constitutes 80 per cent of our country," she said. "That is staggering, and because it is such a vast area, we should be trying to understand how to use it efficiently and preserve the lifestyle of [the bedouins] who live there."

Sharifa Zein said that through the exhibition, the JBRDP also hopes to underscore the role of women in the badia.

"There is a major misconception about women of that region," she said. "In fact, they have always held a very important role in the decision-making level. Their position should be conveyed."

The badia programme was established in 1992 with the aim of linking the badia's economics with that of the Kingdom's development. Its main aim is to improve the living standards of the residents of the region, which includes 35 communities with a population of roughly 16,000, who are highly reliant on a pastoral activities for their livelihood. The JBRDP also concentrates its efforts on scientific research to identify a model useful in the development of and investment in the badia.

The exhibition will conclude on March 27 with a formal fund-raising dinner, which Sharifa Zein hopes will augment the programme's "limited financial resources."

King receives report clearing security forces in death of man killed in Ma'an riots

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday said the reports he received on the 22-year-old man killed in the Ma'an riots indicated that the security forces were not responsible for his death.

"When I inquired about the incident in Ma'an, it was clear that the security forces did not open fire but were themselves fired upon. The victim was hit in the back, which means that one of the people who were on the scene shot him," the King said.

King Hussein defended the role the security forces played in quelling the unrest, stating that they, along with certain governmental officials, were the targets of a "campaign."

"I believe there was a

campaign focused on the security forces, the government, the minister of interior, and the Public Security Department's director general. The security forces exercised restraint during these incidents and it should be clear to everybody that the security and armed forces represent the state and should be accorded respect."

Meanwhile, the autopsy report of Mohammad Abdullah Kateb, the man killed during the riots, has indicated that he was killed by a single bullet that penetrated his heart, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said Monday.

The agency quoted the Ma'an prosecutor general, whose name was not given, as saying that Kateb was hit by a 7-millimetre calibre bullet that "entered his back, penetrated his liver

and heart muscle and caused a wound in the chest wall."

Kateb was killed during a pro-Iraq rally following Friday prayers in Ma'an, 220 kilometres south of Amman.

His death sparked two days of anti-government riots, during which more than 20 persons were injured in clashes between police and civilians.

On Sunday, the army was deployed and curfew was imposed on the city, home to more than 20,000 citizens.

Telephone lines and electricity were cut to the city and army units launched a house-to-house search for illegal weapons.

Kateb's body, which was taken by his family from a local hospital in Ma'an, was exhumed Sunday by police for the autopsy.

His body was later returned to his family for burial, Petra said.

Army and public security sources told the agency that the gun used to kill Kateb "was not a type of gun used by either the police or by the armed forces."

Human rights activists in Amman told the Jordan Times that several people were arrested by security agents in Ma'an during the search for illegal weapons.

The number of those arrested was not immediately available due to the army closure of the city. In addition to communications being cut, no one has been allowed to leave or enter the city.

On Monday, local newspapers showed pictures of weapons confiscated by security agents and police searching some houses in Ma'an.

It was not known how long the curfew will remain on the city.

Meanwhile, the head of the Jordan Chapter of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, Najeeb Rashdan, said three people were arrested by security personnel in different parts of the country.

Mr. Rashdan, a former judge, told the Jordan Times that Basil Bushabshah, a student at Mu'ta University, was arrested in his native town of Karak.

He added that Mohammad Abu Rub and Mohammad Abu Douleh were arrested in Zarqa and Irbid, respectively.

Mr. Rashdan said there was no concrete evidence that the arrests were linked to the riots in Ma'an.

There was no confirmation from the government on these arrests.

Academic delegation expresses support for advanced research

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation from the Bonn-based Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Monday concluded a five-day visit to the Kingdom, during which they expressed the foundation's willingness to continue support for Jordanian academics seeking fellowships to study in Germany.

The delegation, headed by Humboldt Foundation Secretary General Manfred Osten, also conducted talks with Royal Scientific Society President Said Aloulou on last year's performance by Jordanian academics who received fellowships and the foundation's programmes in the Kingdom.

The fellowships provide for post-doctoral candidates to spend a period of up to 24 months in Germany for research purposes. Equipment and literature donations can possibly be included.

The programme also involves reciprocal visits by German professors to execute joint scientific expeditions in the Kingdom.

During their visit, the delegation attended the second Annual General Meeting of the Humboldt Club of Jordan (HCL). HCL Executive Committee chief Marwan Mousa pointed out that four Jordanians were awarded fellowships last year, bringing the total number of recipients to 19.

The delegation expressed their hope that the visit would be a step forward in consolidating the friendship between the peoples of Jordan and Germany and would help intensify the academic exchange between scientists from the two countries and technology transfer to Jordan.

Over the past 140 years, the Humboldt Foundation has awarded 18,500 fellowships worldwide.

Prime minister asks resources authority to settle issue of urban stone quarries

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Monday urged the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) to find a final settlement to the question of environmentally unfriendly stone quarries located within the Kingdom's urban areas.

During a meeting at the NRA with Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Saleh Horani and NRA officials, Dr. Majali said action should be taken to

end procrastination on the part of quarry owners, who have been obstructing government measures to remove quarries from urban regions.

In reviewing the NRA's programmes, the prime minister underlined the importance of feasibility studies on projects conducted by the NRA, especially those connected with exploration for mineral resources.

The prime minister, accompanied by Deputy

Prime Minister and Minister of Information Abdullah Ensour, was briefed by Dr. Horani on the projects of the ministry and the NRA and cooperation with international firms prospecting for oil and mineral resources in the Kingdom.

Also Monday, Dr. Majali called at the Ministry of Administrative Development and met with Minister Bassam Emoush to review the ministry's plans for administrative reform.

Dr. Majali said the public administration system should reward those public servants who excel in their performance and hold accountable those who neglect their duties.

The prime minister said the government was going ahead with plans to decentralise administration in various governorates and institutions to give officials there further authority in dealing with local issues.

JNFW, Srour discuss means of helping women be elected to Parliament

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW) Monday submitted a set of demands designed to help women be elected to Parliament to Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour.

The demands were submitted by JNFW Secretary General May Abul Samen at a meeting attended by Mr. Srour, JNFW board members and several deputies.

Ms. Abul Samen also presented comments and suggestions on amendments to the election laws and loopholes that she said are obstructing the election

of women to the House.

In last November's parliamentary elections, 24 women representing all governorates announced their intention to run for election. The number was later reduced to 17, but still no women made it to the House.

Women's organisations blamed the failure partly on the election system and partly on the lack of public awareness on the need to elect women candidates.

Mr. Srour said women's participation in the democratic process is certain to boost women's contributions to public life and the

development of the country.

He pointed to the many fields in which Jordanian women have had success. He paid tribute in particular to the efforts of HRH Princess Basma, the JNFW president, who he said has been instrumental in promoting the status of women.

Mr. Srour promised that the House would study the women's proposals as submitted during the meeting and requested that the delegation submit ideas on a mechanism to help women reach Parliament. He said women's views and proposals could be submitted for discussion not only by Parliament's law committee but also within the framework of a national dialogue.

The JNFW, which groups 120,000 members representing various sectors of society, is a national voluntary organisation that seeks to promote women's causes in Jordan.

The following deputies attended the meeting: Fawzi Tueimeh, Abdullah Zureiqat, Ahmad Khattab, Ghazi Fayeze, Amjad Majali, and Mukhallad Zawahreh.

Arab rights group calls for Shbeilat's release

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) Monday urged the government to release opposition leader Leith Shbeilat, who was arrested last week in connection with pro-Iraq riots.

"The organisation calls for the release of Mr. Shbeilat in observance of freedom of expression and opinion," said a statement

by the Cairo-based AOHR received by AFP.

It also criticised Jordan for sending the army into the town of Ma'an to put down the disturbance, during which one person was killed and more than 20 wounded.

The AOHR said Jordan's handling of the riots and a ban on protests was "a serious infringement of freedom of expression as guar-

anteed by human rights instruments and by the democratic pluralism on which political life is based in Jordan."

It also urged Jordan "to permit peaceful demonstrations by the Jordanian people in expression of their opinion."

Mr. Shbeilat was arrested early Friday morning after giving a speech in Ma'an during which, according to

witnesses, he encouraged people "to defy the official ban and demonstrate their support for Iraq with force if necessary."

Mr. Shbeilat has served time in prison on two previous occasions: in 1992 when he was sentenced to 20 years for plotting against the state and in 1995 for insulting His Majesty King Hussein.

King welcomes U.N.-Iraqi accord, hopes next stage would end sanctions

(Continued from page 1)

future of the whole region and not just brethren Iraq and its people, for whom we have all feelings of solidarity." The humanitarian suffering of the Iraqi people since 1990 should end, the Prince added.

Mr. Annan expressed appreciation for the support he has received from King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan in his mission.

"The King is one of the leaders of the region who understand the situation in Iraq, someone I have been working with and seeking his support and help in defusing the crisis. I have called him several times and met with His Royal Highness in Paris on my way to Baghdad where he also brought me a message

from His Majesty," Mr. Annan said.

Mr. Annan said his talks in Baghdad were honest, frank and constructive. "Every one is relieved that we are able to defuse the crisis and that the use of force will not be necessary," he added.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali also welcomed the agreement.

"This is good news. We were always eager to reach such a conclusion to spare Iraq a strong military strike that would harm Iraq and the region," Dr. Majali told reporters.

"The agreement means that confidence has been restored between the U.N. Security Council and the Iraqi leadership. We hope that it will be a fresh beginning towards stability in the region," the prime min-

ister added.

"We hope that Security Council members, including the United States, will accept the agreement," Dr. Majali said. Earlier in the day, Dr. Majali told the Senate that the agreement has minimised the chances of "a strong and destructive" U.S. strike on Iraq.

"We hope that Iraq and the whole region will be spared the outcomes of such a strike," the premier told the Upper House.

Meanwhile, Dr. Anani said that Jordan is sure that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein will abide by the new agreement.

"The Iraqis are now sure that they have got a light at the end of the tunnel so they have something that they will be much too careful not to lose," Dr. Anani told Cable News Networks

(CNN) on Monday.

Asked if he felt the U.N.-Iraq deal would enable the U.S. to resume its position as mediator in the Middle East peace process, the minister said he was hopeful it would.

"This is exactly what everybody is hoping for. That the peace process would now be given a chance and we can hope for a serious engagement also on the peace front, particularly on the Palestinian track," Dr. Anani added.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Dr. Anani as saying the Kingdom hopes the Security Council will "consider these developments positively and lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq in exchange for its application of the U.N. resolutions."

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "Braveheart" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

PLAY

* Children's play "Snowwhite and the Seven Dwarfs" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:30 p.m.

LECTURE

* "La fonction d'Ambassadeur au quotidien" by French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajoulet at the French Cultural Centre at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of Finnish literature and textiles at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Feb. 27.

* Private collection of Mamdouh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until March 5 (Tel. 643251). Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."

* "History of Cartoon Drawings" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Feb. 26.

Judicial Council sends Kilani retirement notice

(Continued from page 1)

the High Court, then presided by Judge Abdullah Haddad, which issued the verdict signed by 10 High Court judges.

"The government is blaming me for the press amendments decision, but this decision was taken by the ten judges of the higher court, not me alone," Judge Kilani said.

When Judge Kilani entered the High Court last August, he described his mandate as "an initiative to restructure and upgrade the performance of the judiciary as an important step in upholding justice."

During his short tenure at the High Court, the judge locked horns twice with the Ministry of Interior in two highly contro-

versial cases.

In September, his court suspended new licensing procedures for public transportation issued by the ministry that prohibited taxi owners from selling their cars as public vehicles. Taxi owners claimed that the measure would depreciate the value of their cars. The ministry also imposed a capital requirement of JD1 million and at least 75 operating cars before a taxi office in Amman could be licensed.

A final ruling on the case is expected today. Later in October, Judge Kilani ruled against the Minister of Interior in a case involving the renewal of the passport of Adel Qatnem Omar. Judge Kilani went further in his judgement to say that the

1988 decision to sever all administrative and legal ties with the West Bank was unconstitutional since it did not pass through either parliament or the cabinet.

But Judge Kilani maintains that there are less obvious reasons for his dismissal.

"The real reason is that [the Minister of Justice] is standing in the way of judicial reforms," he charged. "The judicial council sent a memo to His Majesty King Hussein asking that the judicial system be reformed and His Majesty responded by ordering such a reform to take place."

"But the minister hid the King's directives in his drawer," he said.

Northern Ireland peace talks resume without Sinn Fein

BELFAST (AFP) — Northern Ireland peace talks resumed here Monday without Sinn Fein, but the IRA's political wing is being kept in close touch with the process.

The republican party has been sidelined by the British and Irish governments for the next six sessions of the peace process which is going through one of its worst crises since it began five months ago.

But communication lines with Sinn Fein are being kept open, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Premier Bertie Ahern are scheduled to meet Thursday to try to give a boost to the process.

The Protestant Ulster Democratic Party was back at the table after a four-week suspension because of admitted murders by one of its associated militias.

The talks were taking place against a background of heightened tension in the province following Sinn Fein's expulsion after its IRA allies were linked to two Belfast murders. A series of protest demonstrations by Sinn Fein outside Stormont Castle where the talks are taking place was also planned.

The British government hinted Monday that it was satisfied the IRA was not responsible for Friday's car bomb blast outside a police station in Moira, west of Belfast, which injured 11 people.

Northern Ireland Political Development Minister Paul Murphy said he had been advised that the Community Army Council, a republican

splinter group which does not observe the Irish Republican Army ceasefire, was probably responsible.

Any hint of IRA involvement would have effectively ended Sinn Fein's historic participation and left in tatters a peace process aimed at finding a political solution to the conflict in the British-ruled province which has cost more than 3,200 lives since 1969.

The IRA's ceasefire

declared in July let Sinn Fein into the negotiations.

Further evidence of mounting tension came Monday when Irish army experts carried out two controlled explosions on a crude car bomb outside a police station close to the border with Northern Ireland in County Louth.

To demonstrate his continued commitment to the peace process, Mr. Adams has called for a fresh

approach from the British and Irish governments to try and reach a settlement by May, the negotiating deadline set by London and Dublin.

He has asked for another meeting with Mr. Blair which Downing Street said was being considered but which poses a political dilemma for the British leader in view of Sinn Fein's ouster from the talks. Mr. Adams cautioned that Sinn Fein had not decided to go back to the talks when the ban ends March 9. "This is certainly not an attempt at political shadow boxing," he said.

Mr. Ahern, who will hold mid-week talks in Dublin with Mr. Adams, said maintaining the momentum of the peace bid was vital. "We have a great deal of work to do, and we are anxious to get back to work. In a fortnight's time, hopefully we will have everybody back at the talks again."

There were also signs that ministers are considering transferring the talks outside the British Isles in an effort to give them a fresh impetus over the remaining few months.

Talks chairman former U.S. Senator George Mitchell has already indicated he would favour a move and Finland and Austria have been mentioned as possible venues.

But the province's biggest Protestant party, the Ulster Unionists, oppose such a move. MP Ken Maginnis said "to remove us from the reality of the Northern Ireland situation would be utterly folly."

Car bomb defused at security checkpoint in Ireland

DUBLIN (AFP) — Irish army experts carried out two controlled explosions Monday on a car bomb near a security checkpoint less than a mile from the border with Northern Ireland, police said.

Hundreds of people were forced to leave their homes. The alert began when a group of men ran from the car, parked beside the Irish police force base in Dromad, County Louth, less than a mile from the border with Northern Ireland.

Traffic on the main road linking Belfast and Dublin was halted and hundreds of people were forced to leave their homes.

The suspect car, with Northern Ireland licence plates and thought to have been stolen, had a large metal drum on its back seat connected to a detonating device.

The checkpoint, one of the most rigorous on either side of the border, was strengthened last year after the pro-British Ulster Volunteer Force issued threats against targets in the south.

Meanwhile 28 people were appearing in a Galway court Monday after pitched battles between followers of the Galway International Motor Rally and police in the city in western Ireland, at the weekend.

Extra police were on duty this year following similar incidents at the rally last year involving supporters from Northern Ireland.

More than 200 people were involved in the clashes. Bottles and stones were thrown at police wearing riot gear. Four police were injured and several squad cars damaged.

U.S. writers guild hands out best screenplay awards

LOS ANGELES (R) — The Writers Guild of America gave its coveted screenplay awards to "As Good As It Gets" and "L.A. Confidential" in a ceremony which usually serves as a pointer to who will win screenplay Oscars.

Mark Andrus and James L. Brooks won the award for best original screenplay for "As Good As It Gets" while "L.A. Confidential" writers Brian Koppelman and Curtis Hanson took the award for best adapted screenplay.

The awards were presented at a gala ceremony Saturday night at the Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills. They are voted on by members of the Writers Guild.

The winners of the Writers Guild awards often go on to win the same categories in the academy awards. Last year's winners, Billy Bob Thornton for his adaptation of "Slingblade" and Joel and Ethan Coen's original "Fargo" both won Oscars.

"As Good As It Gets" has been nominated for seven Oscars including best picture, Jack Nicholson as best actor and Helen Hunt as best actress, in addition to best original screenplay. The movie tells the story of a cynical ageing writer whose romance with a younger waitress changes his life.

"L.A. Confidential," a



Helen Hunt holds her award for Funniest Actress in a Motion Picture for her role in 'As Good as it Gets' at the 12th annual American Comedy Awards in Los Angeles (Reuters photo)

film noir adaptation of James Ellroy's novel, has been nominated for nine Oscars, including best picture, best adapted screenplay and best supporting actress for Kim Basinger.

"As Good As It Gets" beat out "Titanic," "Boogie Nights," "The Full Monty" and "Good Will Hunting" for the Writers Guild Award. All are nominated for a best

original screenplay Oscar except "Titanic," which was passed over for Woody Allen's "Deconstructing Harry." "L.A. Confidential" topped "Donnie Brasco," "The Ice Storm," "Wag the Dog" and "The Wings of the Dove." Only "The Ice Storm" is not Oscar nominated, missing out to "The Sweet Hereafter."

Fire kills 3 on Romanian vessel off Morocco

MADRID (AFP) — Three sailors died in an explosion and fire aboard a Romanian vessel off the Moroccan coast, Spanish rescue officials said Monday.

Thirteen other crewmen were picked up without

incident from liferafts, the Spanish National Rescue Centre said.

The accident took place Sunday night some 70 nautical miles north of Casablanca, and the Moroccan coast guard was still trying Monday to

douse the flames and take the vessel in tow, the officials said.

Spanish authorities were the first to hear the distress call after an explosion in the machine room of the Adria triggered the fire.

Riot police arrive in violence-torn Albanian town

TIRANA (AFP) — Several hundred Albanian riot police moved in on the northern Albanian town of Shkoder Monday after several official buildings were torched overnight by about 100 masked gunmen.

Police sources said the anti-riot forces from Tirana were facing off with the armed gangs across a bridge leading into the town, as they waited for orders from a national security council emergency meeting being held in the capital.

The rioters damaged the bridge with explosives in a bid to prevent anyone from leaving or entering Shkoder.

Witnesses told AFP that the town's university, library, courthouse and a bank had been set on fire and several buildings were still burning Monday morning.

They added that gangs and residents were looting banks, stores and the city hall and that the local police had failed to intervene.

Interior ministry spokesman Artan Bizgha said the gunmen who set fire to the buildings were carrying "all kinds of weapons and were wearing bullet-proof vests."

Sunday, a dozen armed men attacked the police headquarters in Shkoder and freed 35 inmates.

The assailants entered the building after an hour-long shootout in which three policemen were wounded, according to local hospital sources. They escaped with weapons after holding the station for several hours.

The Shkoder region is the bastion of the opposition Democratic Party headed by former president Sali Berisha, a bitter foe of the ruling Socialist regime.



Accompanied by his fiancée Renate de Water Naude (right), a defiant former president P.W. Botha leaves a court after he defied a summons from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to appear before it (Reuters photo)

Former S. African president Botha pleads not guilty to TRC snub

GEORGE, South Africa (AFP) — Former President P.W. Botha Monday launched a scathing attack on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission after pleading not guilty in the magistrate's court here to charges of snubbing a TRC hearing.

Mr. Botha, through his lawyer, declared his innocence and entered a lengthy plea explanation in which he accused the TRC of bias, of acting maliciously against him and of breaking an undertaking it would not require him to attend any hearings in person.

The 82-year-old former president, who ruled South Africa from 1978 until 1989, failed to appear before a TRC hearing on Dec. 19 into his leadership of the now-defunct State Security Council, which brutally enforced apartheid.

He arrived at the courthouse accompanied by his vivacious fiancée Reinette de Water Naude, 35 years his junior, and in a 20-minute hearing, was formally charged with "illegally, deliberately and without good reason" failing to arrive at the TRC hearing in Cape Town on that date.

Mr. Botha did not address the court, leaving all the talking to his lawyer, Lappe Laubscher. He sat on a chair beside the dock for the duration of the session, which was adjourned for trial to April 14-17.

In his plea explanation, read out by Mr. Laubscher, Mr. Botha said TRC chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu had on Nov. 21, 1996, agreed that he would not have to appear in person if he made a written submission to the TRC.

Mr. Botha subsequently handed over a 1,700-page submission but the commission said it still needed him to appear in person as many questions remained unanswered.

In his plea explanation, the man who oversaw apartheid's most brutal decade, said the TRC had claimed the answers were inadequate even before it had studied his submission.

He claimed further the TRC had acted "in bad faith, with an ulterior motive and manifestly unjustly" when it subpoenaed

him to appear at the Cape Town hearing in that it was not prepared to wait for further written answers to new questions raised.

The TRC, he added, set the hearing in Cape Town when he had furnished it with a medical certificate saying he should not travel until the end of December because of a hip replacement operation.

The octogenarian also accused the TRC of bias, claiming that most of its members are supporters of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) or the smaller, more radical Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

"The accused pleads that the commission was prejudiced and consequently acted ultra vires regarding its activities in general, and in particular, regarding the decisions of the commission relating to (Botha), his government and the functioning of his government," the plea explanation said.

At the start of proceedings, before magistrate Victor Lugaju, lawyers acting for the TRC handed over boxes of documents which had been subpoenaed by Mr. Botha after his first court appearance, on Jan. 23.

Outside the courthouse in this south coast resort, around 100 ANC protesters jeered at the arrival and departure of Mr. Botha and denounced him in placards as a "mass killer" and "South Africa's worst criminal."

Police overnight ringed the building with razor wire and deployed heavily armed officers in the surrounding streets soon after dawn.

Unlike the first hearing when several dozen rightwingers demonstrated their support for Mr. Botha, Monday's hearing saw only a small turnout of white rightwingers, who filled some of the benches in the small courtroom.

Mr. Botha's eldest son Rossouw Botha and daughter Elanza Maritz were among those in the courtroom he greeted warmly on his arrival.

The former president faces a prison term of up to two years if convicted but, due to his age and ill-health, he is unlikely to go to jail, according to legal experts.

N. Korea urges South to respond positively to its call for dialogue

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea Monday urged the South to accept its call for dialogue between political parties from the two Koreas, the North's Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

KCNA quoted Yang Hyong-Sop, North Korea's alternate member of the political bureau of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee and Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly, as saying in a statement Sunday that he supported the measures.

"He expressed the belief that political parties and organisations in South Korea would fulfil their duties and roles in conformity with the aspiration and desire of the whole nation to positively respond to the patriotic appeal," KCNA said.

It quoted Mr. Yang as saying that a letter was sent to political parties and organisations in South Korea last week "out of desire to pool strength for the reunification of the country." Mr. Yang's statement was

issued four days after North Korea handed 70 copies of a letter to the South containing the proposals adopted at a Pyongyang meeting last Wednesday for political parties and organisations here, calling for dialogue.

Mr. Yang said the measures were considered "patriotic and just" and "reflecting the desire of the nation and requirements of the present situation."

But the call made it clear that no reconciliation could be expected while South Korea remained dependant on "foreign forces," a reference to the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea.

The South Korean government last week said it would review the letter before handing it to the addressees, leaders of political parties and organisations including President-elect Kim Dae-Jung.

But so far no comment has been made and analysts here said they believed it was aimed at Mr. Kim's South Korean administration, which takes office Wednesday.

Polynesian military chief says no pollution from French nuclear tests

PAPEETE (AFP) — French Polynesia's armed forces superior commanding officer Vice Admiral Le Beere said the French nuclear tests carried out on Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls in the South Pacific between 1966 and 1973 were environmentally safe. "The islands in this region have not been and are not contaminated," Mr. Beere said.

He said a report from the International Atomic Energy Agency to be released in the next few weeks in Paris and Papeete should confirm this.

Adm. Beere, however, said that "doubts still exist" and added: "To clear up the information, we are ready to provide reinforced medical follow-ups for the population for as long as necessary."

The French weekly magazine Le Nouvel Observateur had reported serious radioactive pollution on Rikitea islet in the Gambier archipelago, the site of the first French nuclear atmospheric tests in July 1966. The magazine said the nuclear pollution on the islet, some 500 kilometres

southeast of Mururoa, was not officially recognised.

Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls in French Polynesia were the sites of French nuclear tests between 1966 and 1973. France carried out its last nuclear test, an underground explosion, in Mururoa in 1996 shortly before signing the international anti-nuclear test ban treaty. Lucas Paumotu, mayor of Mangareva, said the magazine report was "troubling and disturbing."

"But these are things which are beyond us and which we barely understand. Only good medical control conducted over the long term, will allow us then to know if such a thing has truly occurred in this period," he said.

Mr. Paumotu also said that since 1970 all the species of fish in the lagoon had become poisonous. "Why? It has never been explained to us," he said. In 1966 the community in Mangareva have been provided with two open-bunkers in which the population would stay during a nuclear test.

Senior Cambodian resistance commander convicted of theft

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A senior Cambodian resistance commander loyal to deposed co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh has been tried and convicted of antiquities theft, according to a court document seen Monday.

Serei Kosal, a former deputy governor of northwest Battambang province, was convicted in absentia at an unpublished trial there on Feb. 17 and sentenced to 10 years in prison from the date of his arrest, according to a copy of the verdict sheet.

"The provincial court considers this (document) to be a public declaration of the verdict at the in absentia trial," chief judge Chhay Kong wrote.

Serei Kosal is now a senior general in the prince's resistance forces and commands troops in southeast Battambang province near the town of Samlot.

He had been removed from his post as deputy governor last February when fighting broke out in Battambang between his forces, loyal to Prince Ranariddh, and those loyal to strongman Hun Sen.

He returned to Phnom Penh as chief spokesman for the prince and was known for his fiery rhetoric as the Ranariddh-Hun Sen coalition government began to fall apart, finally

breaking up in fierce fighting in July.

In the months between February and July, Hun Sen repeatedly accused Serei Kosal of illegally transporting Khmer Rouge troops to Phnom Penh to protect Prince Ranariddh and other officials in his royalist FUNCINPEC party.

Shortly after those accusations began, the antiquities theft charges against Serei Kosal dating from 1995 and 1996 were filed.

Serei Kosal, along with Prince Ranariddh and two others also face more serious security charges.

The prince, his top military commander, General Nhiek Bun Chhay, and his chief of bodyguards, are to be tried in absentia on charges of illegally importing weapons early next month.

Serei Kosal has denied all the charges including stealing the statues, but the Battambang court's verdict indicated that two limestone Buddha statues, one dating from the Angkor period, had been found on his property.

Both of them, alleged to have been stolen from the provincial government office, have since been turned over to national heritage officials for safekeeping, Chhay Kong said in the verdict.

urges South and positively for dialogue

North Korea issued four days after North Korea handed 70 copies of a letter to the South, containing the proposals for dialogue. The letter was handed over at a Pyongyang meeting between the two sides, here, calling for dialogue. Mr. Yang said the proposals were "patriotic and just," reflecting the desire of the nation and requirements of the present situation. But the call made it clear that no reconciliation was expected while South Korea remained dependent on "foreign forces," a reference to the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea.

The South Korean government last week said it would review the letter before handing it to its political parties and organizations, including President-elect Kim Dae-jung.

But so far no comment has been made and analysts here said they believed the letter was aimed at Mr. Kim, South Korean administration, which takes office Wednesday.

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Both of them, alleged to have been stolen from a provincial government office, have since been turned over to national heritage officials in safekeeping. Chhay, Kosol's bodyguard, was found in the verdict.

Japanese scientists battle to salvage experiments on satellite

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese space scientists said Monday they were battling to salvage experiments on a \$36-million communications satellite by chasing its erratic path around the globe.

A blunder in the launch meant the satellite failed to reach the required height for its journey to a geostationary orbit which would have kept it in a fixed position relative to the Earth.

Scientists at Japan's National Space Development Agency (NASDA) said they were in contact with the communications and broadcasting test satellite known as COMETS.

"In order for us to conduct experiments we will have to roll an antenna to chase the satellite," said a NASDA spokesman.

NASDA officials said they were studying ways to propel the satellite to a higher orbit after Saturday's mishap in which it was released at an altitude of 247 kilometres instead of 273 kilometres.

The satellite was supposed eventually to reach a geostationary orbit 36,000 kilometres from Earth. But the lower-than-planned release means it is too far for the onboard engines to cope with the journey.

COMETS is now flying around Earth on an elliptical orbit which takes it to a distance of 1,901 kilometres at the furthest point and just 250 kilometres at the nearest.

"We are considering what to do with the satellite with an option of three different orbits," said another NASDA official.

The three orbits would make the satellite to a maximum distance from Earth of either 25,000 kilometres, 19,000 kilometres or 15,000 kilometres.

All three are below the distance required for geostationary orbit, forcing ground stations to consider tracking the satellite with moving antennae, the NASDA officials said.

"We don't know if it will be possible for us to conduct experiments," said the NASDA spokesman. "Even if it is possible, we are not sure how long we can continue experimenting," he added.

The blunder Saturday was Japan's first satellite launch failure using the home-grown H-2 rocket.

NASDA found that the firing of the second-stage rocket engine lasted only 44 seconds before the satellite's separation, far shorter than the 192 seconds needed.

Space agency official Akira Awawawa said the satellite cost about 4.52 billion yen (\$36 million) while the rocket launch cost another 2.3 billion yen.

Scientists at southern Japan's Tanegashima Space Centre were preparing to study data from an observatory on the tiny Pacific island of Christmas Island in Kiribati.

COMETS was to have performed tests related to inter-orbital communications, satellite broadcasting, mobile communications and the upgrading of a large geostationary satellite.

Planned experiments included transmission of a television-style telephone signal and trying out Internet connections using mobile telecommunication equipment.

COMETS' launch had been delayed for one day due to bad weather Friday.

The satellite had initially been scheduled for launch last August but was postponed to allow changes to its solar power panels following a failure of similar systems on another satellite.



A group of human rights protesters wave flags and black banners as they stage a silent demonstration in Jakarta. They took to the streets despite the government ban of any gathering for the next three weeks during the indirect presidential election (Reuters photo)

Sri Lanka jets hit Tiger bases as 65 feared killed in sea battle

COLOMBO (AFP) — At least 65 Tamil rebels and troops were presumed killed after Tiger suicide bombers smashed a navy convoy in northern Sri Lanka Monday and the military retaliated with air strikes, officials said.

At least eight small boats packed with explosives rammed and blew up against a navy cargo ship and a landing craft carrying 108 soldiers and sailors, military officials and the defence ministry here said.

The M. V. Pabbatha and Vazalampuri, escorted by seven gunboats, were about to reach their destination in the peninsula of Jaffna when they came under attack from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), officials said.

Within hours of the attack 10 miles off Sri Lanka's northernmost tip of Point Pedro, air force jets bombed suspected sea Tiger bases at Chalai in the north, state radio announced.

The radio gave no details of the strikes by Israeli-built Kfir jets but said several rebel boats were destroyed and an unspecified number of guerrillas killed.

Military sources said 45 soldiers and 17 sailors had so far been rescued, some of them injured. However, hopes were fading for the remaining 46 missing crewmen and soldiers.

The defence ministry said the eight suicide boats had two elite Black Sea Tiger cadres in each and therefore 16 guerrillas may have perished.

However, total rebel losses were estimated by military sources at about 20 killed in the fire fight with other boats also providing cover to the suicide craft.

Seven navy fast-attack craft, including four Israeli-made Dvora-class gunboats, were in the area at the time. They were later deployed for the search and rescue operations.

There was no immediate word from the LTTE about the strike.

The two boats which were sunk were part of a convoy taking troops to the peninsula, which the government wrested from rebel control in December 1995. The soldiers were returning to their posts in Jaffna after leave.

Although the military took Jaffna, the main land access to the region is still held by the rebels, forcing the authorities to use expensive and dangerous sea and air routes to supply the peninsula.

The Tigers attacked a North Korean merchant vessel, the MV Moranbong, in July, killing one crewman. They later freed the other crewmen and the vessel but warned that merchant shipping travelling to Jaffna would be targeted.

The navy has suffered heavy losses from devastating suicide attacks by the LTTE in the past. Navy chief Cecil Tissera narrowly escaped an assassination bid in December.

Troops have been mounting a major offensive to capture the land route to Jaffna since last May but still have some way to go amid heavy losses.

Official figures show nearly 1,000 soldiers and some 3,200 rebels have been killed, but the rebels have denied the figure for their losses.

The Tigers are waging a protracted campaign for an independent homeland in the north and east, where the two-million strong Tamil minority is concentrated.

More than 55,000 people have been killed in the past 25 years with fighting intensifying since 1983.

India accuses Pakistan of aiding a separatist campaign that has left more than 20,000 people dead in the Indian-controlled southern two-thirds of Kashmir since 1989. Pakistan says it gives only moral support.

U.N. resolutions on Kashmir, adopted in 1948-49 after the first war between the two countries, envisaged a referendum. India says the resolutions are no longer relevant.

Mr. Tarar said Pakistan's "time-tested" close ties with China would be further strengthened, while continuing efforts to end "atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust" with Russia.

Relations with the United States have an "important place in our foreign policy," he said.

In recent contacts with Washington, Pakistan had stressed the need for an "equitable" U.S. nuclear non-proliferation policy (towards Pakistan and India), he said, adding that there was mutual agreement to enhance trade and investment links.

On Afghanistan, Mr. Tarar voiced support for peace efforts in the war-torn country promoted by the United Nations and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

He accused India of backing out of its "promise" during the talks to set up a mechanism of joint working committees to address Kashmir and all other bilateral issues.

"I hope India will reciprocate our sincere efforts and seriously address all the issues bedevilling relations between our two countries," he said.

The president urged the international community to put pressure on India to engage in "meaningful" talks to resolve the Kashmir issue.

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Indonesian police break up demo as tensions rise in Jakarta

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesian police backed by armed troops Monday broke up a small and peaceful demonstration by women protesters handing out flowers amid rising tension in the capital.

Three of the dozen women were arrested and taken to Jakarta's police headquarters after the protest over soaring prices was dispersed.

They had been detained for holding their protest on a busy central roundabout and in view of several major international hotels without permission, police at the scene said.

Authorities have banned all public gatherings in the capital until after next month's presidential election ends on March 11. A forum on political reform, to be attended by leading opposition figure Amien Rais, was abandoned Saturday after police said it was banned.

Monday's protest by a group of women calling themselves "The Voice of Concerned Mothers" was the first to test the ban, implemented Thursday.

The well-dressed women earlier displayed banners complaining about the soaring prices of basic commodities and sang patriotic songs.

"Safeguard our milk supply," said the banners. "Mothers are the pillars of society." "We want our families to be healthy."

A police officer who identified himself only as Arthur D. said the three did not have a permit to hold the protest and would be questioned. "If we find that the intent was sabotage, then they will be arrested," he added, when asked whether the three were formally under arrest.

A statement distributed by the protesters blamed the current dire economic situation on "a government which does not pay attention to the interests of the common people and which represses their voices."

"We do not want to live in a culture of intimidation and manipulation," Tuty Heraty, an academic at the state-owned Universitas Indonesia, told AFP on the sidelines of the protest.

Another protester, Tienke Arif, said the group represented about 50 mothers but acted on behalf of all Indonesian women.

The women wanted healthy families whose basic needs were guaranteed, their children to have adequate nutrition and "a civilised nation which respects basic human rights and civil rights," the statement said.

"We feel that the crisis in Indonesia is a great cause of concern," they said, adding the price of essential commodities such as rice, cooking oil and especially milk had "soared beyond reach."

The rupiah has lost more than 70 per cent of its value against the dollar since July, prompting an economic slowdown and soaring prices.

The rises have sparked rioting in more than 25 towns and cities across Indonesia in the last two weeks, leaving at least five dead, hundreds arrested and massive damage.

A silent protest over Indonesia's economic crisis and political system was permitted to go ahead in another part of the city some two hours later.

Some 24 demonstrators clutched a strip of black cloth and held their fists in the air for about 30 minutes at the main entrance to a central arts centre where some activists study.

The protesters were members and sympathisers of the Indonesian Solidarity for Amien and Mega (SIAM), a group supporting challengers to President Suharto's bid for the next presidential term in March.

SIAM was formed last year to support the candidacy of outspoken Muslim leader Amien Rais, who heads the influential Muhammadiyah Islamic movement, and of leading opposition figure Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Mr. Rais and Mr. Megawati have both said they would accept nomination as candidates for the presidency, which is to be decided next month by a 1,000-strong electoral committee dominated by Suharto loyalists.

A human rights watchdog, meanwhile, urged the country's new military commander General Wiranto to find two dissidents who have been missing for nearly three weeks.

The Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association (PBHI) said the lack of police action had prompted speculation the disappearances of Desmon Mahesa, 33, director of the Nusantara Legal Aid Institute and Siaga secretary-general Pius Lustrilang, 30, were linked to their pro-democracy activities.

Brussels (AFP) — The European Union will not back an attempt by the U.S. or any other country to have China's human rights record condemned at the annual meeting of U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva next month, EU foreign

ministers agreed here Monday.

"In view of the first encouraging results of the EU-China human rights dialogue, the Council agreed that neither, the Presidency nor any other member state should table or co-sponsor a draft resolution at the next U.N. Commission on Human Rights," the ministers said in a statement.

The move follows a bitter row last year when France, used its veto to prevent the EU presenting a resolution in Geneva. The EU had presented

such a resolution every year since 1990.

The move led to recriminations after Denmark, which decided to go ahead and present the resolution, was threatened with trade sanctions by China and France clinched a series of major contracts.

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Win for diplomacy

EVEN THOUGH the nuts and bolts of the accord reached between Iraq and the U.N. in Baghdad on Sunday have yet to be revealed, certain elements of it could be discerned from what Kofi Annan and Tariq Aziz said in their joint press conference yesterday.

Two major sticking points that reportedly delayed agreement until the last moment appear to have centred on the time frame for carrying out the mandate of UNSCOM's weapons inspection teams in obtaining full and unfettered access to all sites in the country including the presidential palaces. In the press conference the U.N. secretary general shed light on the first point by saying that whereas no time limit would be imposed on the work of the inspection units, the mandate of UNSCOM would nevertheless have to be concluded within a "reasonable time." The rule of thumb in legal construction is that whenever no time limit is specifically mentioned in any agreement, the "reasonable time" criterion would have to be read into the text of the accord. This effectively means that the U.N. Security Council would have to pronounce itself on this issue at a later stage. The formula thus offered the most amicable way out for the two sides. On the one hand it addressed Iraq's legitimate concerns that the inspection of their country could not be accepted as an open-ended exercise. On the other hand, the formula should satisfy Washington's insistence that no time frame be placed in writing on the conduct of the inspections.

On the other issue, which concerned the lifting of the punitive sanctions imposed against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Annan was understandably not able to go beyond saying that the boycott would be lifted upon the faithful implementation of the Baghdad accord. Nevertheless there is no doubt that whatever assurances Iraq won from the U.N. on ending the sanctions, whether written or otherwise, need to be taken into consideration at the earliest possible opportunity.

Every carefully drafted agreement would have to be interpreted against the backdrop of the deliberations held on the eve of the signing of the pact. The negotiating process that culminated in the deal is obviously reflected in the records and minutes of the long drafting sessions. In the final analysis, it is the Security Council which would have to make a decision on the lifting of the sanctions regime. The council, however, would not be acting in a vacuum. Rather it will act within the context of what transpired between Annan and the Iraqi government. The positions of France, Russia and China on this question would probably be sympathetic to Iraqi demands. Britain may still waver on this issue. But it is more likely that London would eventually adopt the stance pronounced recently by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook who favoured lifting the boycott as soon as Iraq agreed to unimpeded inspection of all sites. Washington may choose to drag its feet. However, with the plight of the Iraqi people now attracting more attention than ever, the Clinton administration might come under increasing pressure to be fair.

The U.S. needs to draw the right conclusions from this latest showdown with Iraq. It can still claim success for its policy by asserting that none other than its military build-up in the Gulf could persuade the Iraqi regime to comply fully with the Security Council resolutions. But no matter how hard the Clinton administration tries to punch holes in the new U.N.-Iraq accord, it in the end has to accept international legitimacy and add to its policies in the region an element of fairness and a human dimension.

This Washington can do today by respecting the will of the international community as represented by the agreement signed in Baghdad yesterday.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said it is pointless for the American war industry to produce "smart" bombs and sophisticated weapons if they are kept in the hands of those in the U.S. administration who lack wisdom and intelligence. He said the administration has proved to be a total failure on two counts: first in securing the success of the Middle East peace process when it allowed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to make a mockery of it; and when it failed in its dual containment policy against Iran and Iraq and failed to topple the Saddam regime through sanctions prompting it to resort to the use of force. Dr. Fanek said the U.S. can ensure the success of its policy only when its administration is wise and deals with world crises wisely and not through the use of force. The U.S. administration's recourse to use force reflects its bankrupt politics and its inability to persuade the world community of its views. Not only has the U.S. administration failed to rally the world community behind its decision to attack Iraq but it also failed to convince the American public of the necessity of resorting to aggression, according to the writer. He said the U.S. state and defence secretaries tasted such failure in their recent meetings with univer-

View from the Fourth Circle

Direct from London and Washington, it's Daffy Duck diplomacy

By Rami G. Khouri

THE NEWS from Baghdad of U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's agreement with Iraq on the continued, full implementation of the U.N. weapons inspection system in Iraq seems likely to resolve this immediate crisis, but the outlook for the future remains clouded. The good news this week is substantial: — military attacks against Iraq seem to have been averted for the moment; — the United Nations Security Council has voted to significantly increase the oil-for-food arrangement that can reduce the suffering of Iraqi citizens who, like most Middle Easterners, have no real say in their government's policies; — the diplomatic role and credibility of the United Nations have been partially restored by the good work of its able Secretary-General; — the weapons inspection system reduces any imagined or planned Iraqi use of weapons of mass destruction against its neighbours; — many people in the United States and a few in the U.K. spoke out clearly against Anglo-American unilateral militarism, revealing that the Anglo-American people are much smarter than their bombs; and, — the full implementation of U.N. resolutions re-validates the sanctity of the United Nations as a moral conscience and logistical peace-maker and peace-keeper in our world.

The bad news this week is equally substantial: — there is no guarantee that any of the agreements reached will be fully implemented or that new obstacles will not arise during the ongoing weapons inspections; — the United Nations' reputation and role were only partially restored, and then only after having been taken to the brink of embarrassing diplomatic irrelevance by that peculiarly brutish Anglo-American legacy of arrogance and violence; this saw the U.S. and U.K. blatantly ignore the formal role of the U.N. Security Council in favour of an Anglo-American determination unilaterally to interpret and re-define U.N. resolutions, judge if compliance is taking place, add new conditions such as a change in the Iraqi leadership, threaten the use of force, and ultimately use military force if deemed appropriate; that attitude continues unabated, with Washington stating that it would do as it wishes if it does not like the agreement Mr. Annan negotiated; — there was no attempt seriously to address the single most important complaint among Arabs and many others in the world, the accusation of gross Anglo-American double standards in implementing U.N. resolutions related to Israel and Arab states; — Iraqi-American British tensions continue to be a destabilising element in many parts of the Arab World, as we witnessed this week

in Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere in the form of domestic tensions and some low-level political and physical violence; and, — the Anglo-American military build-up triggered an upsurge in anti-American Russian official statements, signalling the dangers of sparking global rather than only regional tensions.

The most troubling dimension of the Iraq situation, in my view, is the institutionalisation by the United States and the United Kingdom of what can best be called Daffy Duck diplomacy — a term that captures that wide combi-

The immediate problem with Daffy Duck diplomacy is that it results in suffering and waste to both the good guy and the bad guy; without ever resolving the underlying causes of tension.

nation of elements that define Anglo-American government actions on Iraq. The American government attitude to Iraq perfectly mirrors the fundamental moral values of the American cartoon and entertainment industry that define much of American public culture: the issues are defined in simple, black-and-white, good guy/bad guy terms; the bad guy is really, irrevocably, incorrigibly evil ("a repeat offender", Madeleine and Bill keep calling Saddam); the bad guy is personalised and dehumanised (i.e., not the Iraqi leadership, but Saddam Hussein the person); the bad guy of cartoon morality has to be repeatedly beaten up by the good guy, because he only understands force; the bad guy keeps coming back for more beatings because he is too stupid and/or evil to learn the lessons of his repeated beatings; the bad guy cares not for anyone else, and is willing to allow great suffering in order to perpetuate his own life; the cartoon story line keeps repeating itself, but every time with a slightly different twist, in order to keep the audience watching; the four essential elements in cartoon values — the bad guy, the good guy, the bad guy's use of deception, and the good guy's repeated use of substantial violence — are always there in every show; beneath the main story line is a sub-plot of the good guy's heroic morality and an epic

will to sacrifice for the greater good of the world, indeed, even to save the world from a terrible fate (a theme that is amplified, please note, in Anglo-American presentations like Batman, James Bond, and other such phenomena).

The immediate problem with Daffy Duck diplomacy is that it results in suffering and waste to both the good guy and the bad guy; without ever resolving the underlying causes of tension. The longer term danger is that Anglo-American culture may be trying to project what is quickly becoming its supreme national value — consumer entertainment — as a dominant determinant of the character and fate of other countries in the world. The fact that Mickey Mouse is already the world's most widely recognised character and visual image confirms the possible dimensions of such a frightening trend. The slow institutionalisation of Daffy Duck diplomacy as the successor to, say, the United Nations Charter or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will only lead to perpetual global resentment and tension, and probably also to violence and warfare that would be hard to contain in one part of the world.

The complete lessons of what we are experiencing in the Iraq situation must be analysed and digested on multiple levels, if we hope to escape from the undignified fate of perpetual subjugation to cartoon morality and comics values. If there is a pause now before the next show, we would do well to examine the following issues: the true threat, if any, of Iraq to others in this area; the presence or development of weapons of mass destruction in all parts of the Middle East, including Israel, Syria, Iran and others; the need to implement all U.N. resolutions with equal validity and determination; the precise relationship of the U.N. Security Council to the world's leading powers; and the underlying and still expanding causes of tension and resentment throughout the Middle East that are not directly related to Israel, the United States or Iraq, including socio-economic disparity, political autocracy, the containment of indigenous and religious identities, and continuing regional and domestic fragmentation.

These inter-linked dimensions of the repeated dramas and wars of the Middle East were not seriously addressed during the criminal Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990, and so they have returned in 1998 — ghost-like — to spark this latest little drama. They will return again and again to haunt those who try to escape the real world, and instead seek refuge in the false universe of the amusing, the make-believe, and the commercially entertaining.

A repetition of past horrors

To the editor:

IN THE present quarrel between the U.S. administration and the leadership of Iraq, a matter of utmost seriousness and potential for disaster, one wants to be able to believe that we, in the U.S., are sincere in our efforts. But the whole debacle seems in so many ways a repetition of the many horrific political/military involvements we have been involved in since the end of World War II. There is a long list of tales of reported atrocities supposedly committed by, or aided and abetted by, agents of the U.S. government. For several years, personal descriptions of terrible destruction and death have emerged from Viet Nam, of course, but also from Indonesia, East Timor, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Belize, Chile, and many other places. Could these scattered examples of violent and unlawful CIA and paramilitary involvement be true? Viet Nam to be sure, but the others... are they factual?

Being born and raised in Indiana where one is schooled to the theme "truth, justice, and the American way," one learned to brush off short negative paragraphs found on the back pages of news publications — about purported CIA death squads, arms and training for violent dictatorships, and extensive use of weapons of mass destruction such as napalm and cluster bombs — as merely the overzealous waxings of left-wing radical pundits. At least we were taught to think that. But time and events have a way of exposing the evidentiary nature of an entity, whether it be a person, an event, or a country. When personal research tends more and more to add credence to the validity of these many, varied, and unfortunate historical tragedies, then the innocence of ignorance is lost.

If there is a good side to such negative "enlightenment" it has to be that the thusly-opened mind has a wider and more cautious perspective of current events, and that we can more properly prepare for the very probable retribution which may come our way. Having acted the role, for several decades, of arms dealer to the world, we now have to decide whether to commit deliberate acts of violent aggression on other sovereign nations — and more tragically to kill thousands of their innocent civilians — in order to protect ourselves from the reality, the threat, or even the possibility of their using such weapons on our nation or on other nations "friendly" to us. Of course the raised voices of those who protested over these many years against our international arms-salesman mentality were unheard; the protests were lost among the shuffling noise of "defence" contractor accountants rushing to the bank. (These moneychangers also rushed, albeit less noisily, to contribute to favoured political candidate coffers, and to private and public foundations sponsoring flashy news documentaries on the wonders of American military hardware.) But now the fun of counting the dollars is about over and the real cost — that of placing the security of our own cities at risk is coming to light.

Violence is almost never the response which serves the long-term best interest of the assailant, and this is especially true of the use of the bomb. Like an airborne land mine, it just whooshes away from the source and crashes to earth, bringing with it a hell-hot blast of destruction, and leaving a residue of screaming, tortured survivors and blood-stained piles of concrete and steel. There is little

LETTERS

unleash it.

Maybe that's one reason we turn more and more to it. Perhaps it is because so few Americans, of the U.S. variety, not the people of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Grenada, Panama, etc., have experienced a bombing — discounting the single-building episode at Oklahoma City — that we seem to have little compunction about using it. But clearly, when American missiles and warplanes deliver tonnes of bombs over foreign populations, the folks who survive it develop a fierce detestation of the bombers, that is, us, much like the national wave of loathing and indignation we felt after the Oklahoma blast. How can we imagine that bombing the people of Iraq will cause them to hate Saddam Hussein more than they do those who perpetrate such horrifying agony on them? They won't of course.

And at the end of the day, (week, month) Clinton and Cohen say Saddam and some of his mass weaponry will remain. What are we doing here? Is this what we want?

Mike McKillip
Muncie, Indiana, USA

Congratulations

To the editor:

PLEASE ACCEPT the warm congratulations of one Canadian resident on your own government's resistance to the projected U.S. bombing campaign against Iraq. I realise that it is often not easy for small countries to take a principled and moral stance against a superpower like the U.S. and I admire your government greatly for doing just that.

Please also accept my apologies for the Canadian involvement, small as it might be, in this shameful enterprise. I'm appalled that my hard-earned tax dollars will be used in part to assist the U.S. military in its forthcoming murderous onslaught against innocent Iraqi civilians.

Irrespective of what "the polls" might say, large numbers of Americans and Canadians see through the U.S. administration's blatant propagandising on this issue and want nothing to do with this state-sanctioned aerial holocaust against the Iraqi people.

We may not be able to stop it, but we can tell you how we feel about it. We are ashamed and disgusted.

John Whitley
Toronto
Canada

Note of thanks

To the editor:

I WISH to thank His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Crown Prince Hassan and the people of Jordan for their efforts towards a peaceful solution [to the Iraqi crisis].

I would also like to send President Saddam greetings and thanks for a wise and intelligent decision that impacts the welfare of all people of all nations. I will send a letter to him care of Kofi Annan at the U.N.

Freedom 'undeserved'

To the editor:

WHAT WE are witnessing these days from ill-mannered corrupting souls who are affecting our security and the reputation of this loving country, is due to the forbearance and undeserved freedom of expression/comportment for their kind.

It is very upsetting to watch news reports on CNN, BBC, NBC etc... about the demonstrations in Jordan. These stations showed footage of such incidents that in turn affected our image regionally and globally.

New laws must be passed to curb such transgressions toward this country and its people. Many new laws must be passed to castigate people who use this country as a profit centre for their own benefits. These people are only interested in making enough money and heading abroad to criticise this country, abusing the needs of the country, the rights of the people either in benefits, employment, and opportunities.

Many people know that Jordan is the only safe haven for any person who seeks refuge. This is a well-known tradition for Arabs in general, and Jordanians in particular. But it seems that such humans abuse such personal freedoms when there is no one to chastise them. Otherwise, they have to keep their mouths confined, and things would be a lot different.

Samer Qubain
Amman

'Waste of time'

To the editor:

IN REFERENCE to the news headlined "Police disperse thousands at illegal pro-Iraqi rally" (Jordan Times, Feb. 14, 1998), I would like to express my total support to the government on its decision.

The question which comes to mind is why is Jordan the only Arab country in which such an illegal rally took place? Even if this rally were permitted, I do not see anything coming from it. If the whole international community is looking for the diplomatic solution to the crisis, why do we have to waste our time and efforts in Jordan to show our support for Iraq in an old fashioned way. At this time we are not strong enough physically, but we have the strength of being highly educated, so we can differentiate between right and wrong. Hopefully, one day we will be accurate in making decisions.

My advice to the opposition leaders if they are still willing to support Iraq (or more specifically the Iraqi president) is that they have to go to Baghdad and become human shields to the war. Do not include Jordan as part of this scenario.

Abdelaziz L. Al-Khlaifat
Chicago, Illinois
USA

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should

Excavations at Neolithic Ba'ja provide new insights into earliest human villages

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

ONE OF the most exciting dimensions of Jordanian archaeology in recent decades has been the veritable explosion of research into human community and economy during the Neolithic period — that historic era around 8500-4500 BC when people first settled into year-round hamlets and camps that ultimately became villages, towns and cities. Jordan is proving to be one of the most important repositories of Neolithic villages in the world, with nearly a dozen major Neolithic sites excavated in Jordan in recent years.

The latest is Ba'ja, nestled within a well protected and naturally fortified valley some 14 kilometres north of Petra/Wadi Musa. The area receives about 200 mm of rainfall annually, at an altitude of 1120-1160 metres above sea level. Sited on a steep slope and protected on all sides by the Siq al-Ba'ja and almost vertical cliffs, Ba'ja is only accessible through the siq, which is blocked by large boulders in several places. Its expansion was obviously limited by its natural setting, but this is one reason why scholars have been keen to examine it. Unable to expand horizontally, it started to expand vertically, giving us perhaps the world's earliest two-story built houses.

"Ba'ja so far is the only example among the major early Neolithic central settlements that may allow us to study, undistorted, the internal organisation and conditions of growth and decline for such settlements under purely local conditions," according to project directors Hans-Dieter Bienenr, director of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in Amman, and Hans Georg Gebel of ex oriente e. V. (Berlin, Germany).

Covering an area of less than 1.5 hectares, Ba'ja is smaller than other early Neolithic sites in Jordan such as 'Ain Ghazal, Wadi Shu'eib, es-Sifiya, Basta, and 'Ain Jammam. Such early Near Eastern sedentary communities documented in Jordan are all characterised by large central settlements — and always situated on the Jordan Rift Valley's eastern edge. They may reflect the earliest manifestation of "proto-urbanism"; or, they may be a chronologically isolated feature within humankind's development up to city hierarchies. Bienenr and Gebel said in a recent interview here with the Jordan Times — mirroring the still strong debate within the academic community about when we can first identify "urban" or "proto-urban" situations in history.

The first season of excavations at Ba'ja in 1997 revealed substantial architectural remains of a village that flourished at the end of the period called the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB), around 6500-6000 BC. The village's well preserved and dense housing quarters were arranged on steep-slope terraces, within the general framework of three major terrace walls. This gives the settlement a Pueblo-like look, and the original village also must have resembled today's rural villages in south Jordan. About 250 square metres of ancient structures have been opened to date.



Close-up view of some of the over 8000-year-old excavated domestic architecture at Ba'ja (Photos by Katharina Hoefken and Stephan Fengler, Berlin, Germany)

Variety of structures

The excavations revealed many structures comprising double-faced, straight and curved walls made of roughly dressed sandstone slabs stabilised by small stone wedges. The walls formed small, rectangular or polygonal rooms, with a few large rooms and/or courtyards in places. The rooms ranged in size from 1.5 to 15 square metres, but most were small. Room floors were made of a lime-plaster paving on top of a cobble layer resting on the sterile soil. Some openings in walls were later blocked, and some smaller walls seem to have been later additions, indicating functional changes in the architecture during the life of the village. Some of the longer walls weakened over time and were stabilised and strengthened with reinforcements, sometimes more than once.

A succession of sub-phases in the village's life can be identified in places, in the form of blocked wall openings, raised walls, additional walls, buttressing of walls, and the almost certain addition of second stories to existing houses. The architecture generally is identical to that at Basta, 'Ain Jammam, Ghwair 1 and es-Sifiya Neolithic villages.

The site of Ba'ja, also called el-Mehmad by some locals, was discovered in 1983 by Dr. Manfred Lindner and his team from the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft, Nuernberg in Germany. Dr. Lindner is well-known to all scholars working in the greater Petra region, where he has conducted many surveys and archaeological excavations in recent decades. Hans Georg Gebel made an initial probe at the site in 1984, revealing substantial

cultural layers of the late PPNB. Ba'ja is probably the successor settlement to nearby Beidha, which was abandoned by the end of the Middle PPNB, perhaps for environmental reasons such as erosion. Because the Ba'ja community's possibilities for extensive pastoralism were limited by the restricted environment, it seems to have relied more on manufacturing and trade, especially the manufacture of stone bracelets on an industrial scale, Bienenr and Gebel said.

Distinct zones

Three distinct activity zones could be identified at the end of last year's dig: remains of ovens associated with ashy layers, often rich in animal bones; food processing activities evidenced by many grinding tools; and the "industrial" area with a high concentration of stone discs that were left over from the manufacture of sandstone rings (or bracelets).

The sandstone rings were manufactured from abundantly available stone that was first flaked into a rough disc shape with an average diameter of 8-9 centimetres, from which an inner disc was removed; the remaining outer ring was then carved, chiseled and ground into its final shape, and sometimes was back-stained and further decorated. The project directors see this development of "prestige" goods for trading as one means of offsetting the villagers' restricted ability to rely on large-scale agriculture or herding, due to their peculiar, safe but confined location in a relatively isolated valley.

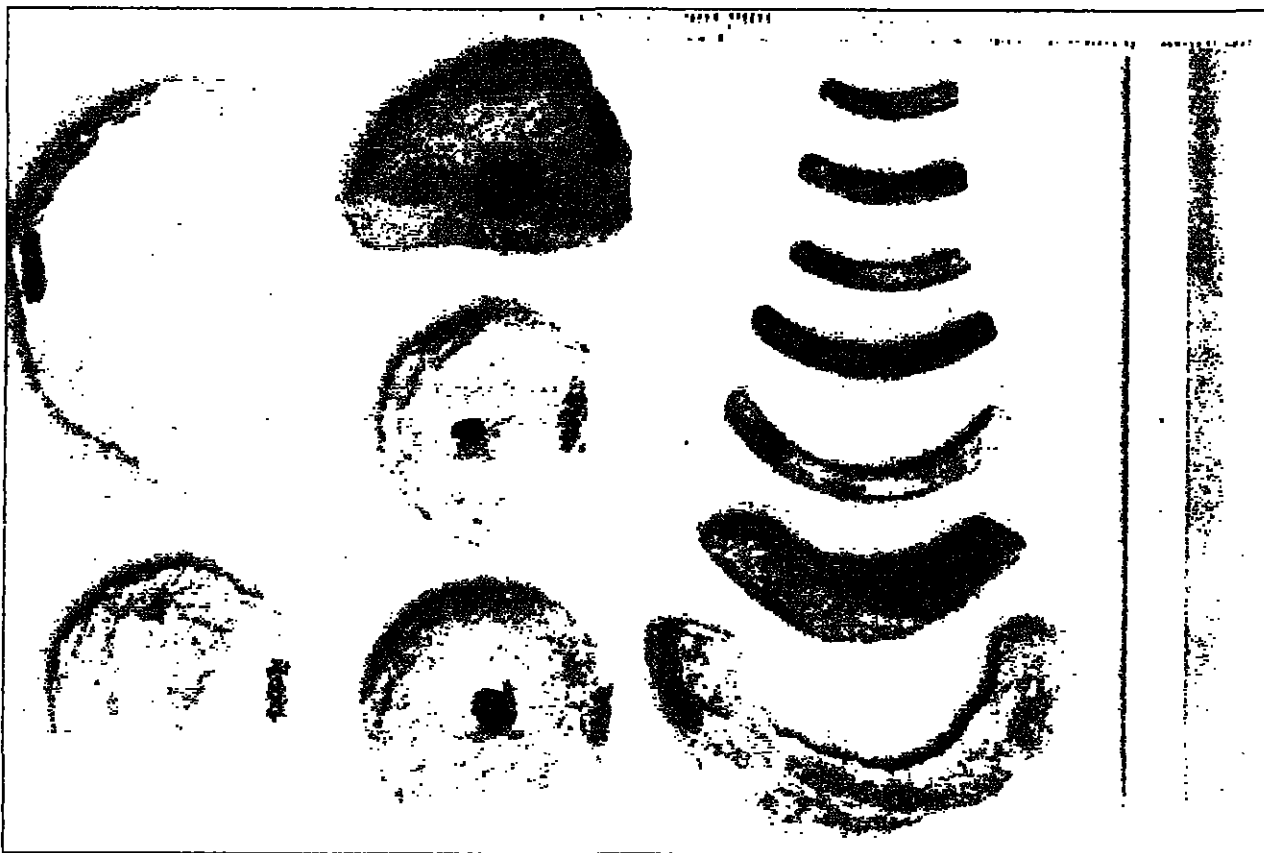
The ground stone and chipped stone industries at Ba'ja reflect the known varieties from other PPNB

sites in the region, though some local variations are already starting to become clear, such as less developed sub-classes of tool types. Little evidence for specialised workshops has been detected, but this is limited at by some stone tool cores and worked (identifiable) arrowheads and borers. Other tools include adzes, celts, hammerstones, and a few retouched or ad hoc implements. The stone tool kit

reflects a self-reliant regional centre rather than a centre involved in large-scale surplus production and exchange," Bienenr and Gebel said.

Only a few worked bone fragments were found, including piercers and spatulas and a blank used to manufacture beads. Other artifacts excavated included mother of pearl and marine mollusks, and some stone beads.

No human remains have been



Steps in the production of sandstone rings at Ba'ja (from bottom to top): rough disc, drilled out cores, rings that were finished by grinding and polishing.

Clinton, Chirac accept agreement, say 'it should be enforced as soon as possible'

(Continued from page 1)

stressful circumstances.

"And all of us, when we get caught in those situations, may make one or two slips — it doesn't mean we should be condemned."

The Iraqi media has called Mr. Butler a "mad dog" for his outspoken comments about alleged continuing Iraqi non-conventional weapons capability.

Mr. Annan signed the deal with Iraq Monday to try to end the impasse over U.N. weapons inspections and prevent a U.S. military strike against Iraq.

The agreement I have reached with the government of Iraq, I consider balanced and... in conformity with Security Council resolutions," Mr. Annan said.

"Therefore, I hope it will be acceptable to all the members of the Security Council," including the United States, Mr. Annan told reporters.

Mr. Annan will name special teams to inspect presidential palaces under the terms of the deal he signed with Iraq to end

the weapons inspection crisis, an official Iraqi statement said Monday.

"The simple fact of agreeing on the entrance to these sites... by a team to be formed by the secretary general means Iraq has more credibility than the United States and Britain," said the statement quoted by the Iraqi News Agency.

The official statement was published after a meeting of President Hussein and the Iraqi leadership, which said "the agreement concluded with the United Nations was balanced."

Mr. Aziz, who signed the agreement for his government, said the deal was a victory for diplomacy.

"It was diplomacy. Wise, balanced United Nations, world diplomacy that enabled us to reach this agreement. Not subtle rattling," Mr. Aziz said. "This is an agreement of reason."

Mr. Annan confirmed that the agreement addressed the U.N. inspectors' right to unlimited access to suspected weapons sites. Iraq had earlier offered to allow inspectors into

presidential sites for two months.

The United States had vigorously opposed such a limit, and agreement on that point reportedly was clinched only when Mr. Annan met President Hussein for three hours Sunday afternoon.

"I can say categorically, there are no time limits or deadlines in the agreement," Mr. Annan said. "We will try to do our work in a reasonable period," he said.

When a reporter asked Mr. Aziz about U.N. inspectors entering presidential palaces, which Iraq had designated off-limits on grounds of national sovereignty, the deputy prime minister interjected firmly: "First of all, you don't know what we have agreed upon. So don't rush to conclusions."

Mr. Annan said he consulted with all five permanent members of the Security Council during his three-day negotiations here. Asked about Ms. Albright's reaction, Mr. Annan said: "She did have some questions, which I addressed, and I think we will be talking further when I get back to New York."

An endorsement by the Security Council would save Iraq from a punishing U.S. air attack, and save Washington from strong international opposition to such a strike. It would also be a triumph for Mr. Annan — if the Iraqis hold to the bargain.

Asked if he gave an ultimatum to Iraq, Mr. Annan said: "I did not come here with ultimatums. The secretary-general does not speak in those terms."

"I am hopeful and perhaps even confident that this agreement will take us beyond the crisis," he said.

Mr. Annan's deal-making meeting with President Hussein took place at the eleventh hour at the Republican Palace, one of eight presidential sites that Iraq had declared off-limits to U.N. weapons inspectors. The inspectors are trying to determine if Iraq has complied with U.N. orders, issued at the end of the 1991 Gulf war, to destroy all long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction. That condition must be met before U.N. economic sanctions can be lifted. Baghdad also says it has destroyed

the proscribed weapons.

Asked when the sanctions will be lifted, Mr. Annan said "that will be determined by the completion of the work" of the weapons inspectors and the International Atomic Energy Agency. "I hope... we will be seeing light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Asked if this level of crisis could be repeated, Mr. Annan said: "I think the import of your question is, are we going to be back at this crisis three months from now, six months from now, I genuinely believe if we do the things we say we will do, we won't have that kind of crisis."

In Washington, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said preliminary accounts had been received from Baghdad, but he refused to assess them. "We've got a lot of serious questions. It's a very serious matter at a serious time, and we want to get some questions answered," he said.

The crisis over weapons inspections has brought the Gulf to the brink of war. The United States has sent a naval armada and 25,000 troops to

the region to mount air strikes on Iraq.

Reterring to the threat, Mr. Aziz said "the crisis is with the United States, which is trying to impose its will on the U.N."

Pro-Iraq protests have erupted across the Arab World and sent Israelis scurrying for gas masks and diplomats there preparing to leave. Israel also decided Sunday to distribute antibiotics to protect against a biological attack, despite Mr. Annan's news.

France took some credit for the U.N. chief's deal, saying Paris "constantly defended the idea of a diplomatic solution."

"France welcomes the announcement made in Baghdad and hopes that the accord will respond to expectations," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Israel also welcomed a diplomatic solution. "The whole world would rather see this resolved by diplomacy rather than force, provided that the danger of an Iraqi attack, non-conventional or otherwise, is eliminated," said David Bar-Ilan, the top adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu.

Before the announcement, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said in London that the United Nations could consider lifting the sanctions if President Hussein gives Mr. Annan a written promise to comply with the inspections.

"If he would comply... and if he really is willing this time to cooperate and not continue to deceive and delay, that [lifting the sanctions] could be done in the fairly near future," Mr. Cook said on British Broadcasting Corp. Radio.

Mr. Annan and his eight-member team negotiated with Iraqi officials around the clock Saturday in a series of meetings that ended at 2 a.m. The talks resumed later Sunday morning at the Iraqi foreign ministry. After that, Mr. Annan met President Hussein.

U.S. forces, however, continued moving to the Gulf Monday despite the deal struck with Iraq. U.S. defence officials said.

Several flights carrying U.S. army troops from Fort Stewart, Georgia, were scheduled to depart for Kuwait to join some

5,200 troops already there as a deterrent force, a spokesman at Fort Stewart said.

"We continue on with the deployment," said Bob Close, a base spokesman.

In the past week, some 3,700 U.S. army troops have been airlifted to Kuwait from Fort Stewart. Mr. Close said about 500 more troops from the base are slated for deployment. Another 1,500 already were there conducting exercises when the crisis erupted last fall.

The deployments raise the total numbers of ground troops in the Gulf to about 6,500.

It was unclear whether the Pentagon would move ahead with plans to deploy as many as 2,000 more army troops to Kuwait.

The Pentagon also was awaiting a White House decision on whether to call up reserves for Gulf duty, spokesmen said.

Defence Secretary William Cohen announced Sunday he had requested authority to call up 500 members of the National Guard and reservists with skills in logistics, airlift, transportation, and port security.

DEF plans new strategy to curb borrower abuse

By Suha Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's state-run Development and Employment Fund (DEF) plans to train its employees on assessing the feasibility of projects before granting loans to help curb borrower abuse.

The training scheme, due to start next month, will also enable employees to ensure the sustainability of any project funded by the DEF launched in 1990 to boost development through helping fund income-generating projects.

"Some of the borrowers are under the impression that our funds are some sort of free grants and gifts and that we

will not take action to make them repay the loans," DEF Director General Ali Qabbah told the Jordan Times in an interview.

"Seventy per cent of our borrowers are meeting their financial commitments on time while the rest are dragging their feet," he added.

The DEF, using funds given by the government and international lenders, has so far helped finance 5,631 projects that have benefited 11,147 people under easy term repayments.

"Some projects don't work out because the borrower is incapable of conducting a feasibility study prior to establishing the project," Mr. Qabbah said.

"So starting from March, we intend to train our employees to conduct and analyse the feasibility study of any project given to them to ensure its sustainability before the loan is granted," he added.

Under an ambitious plan, the DEF plans to cooperate with commercial banks to widen its umbrella of activities. IMF-directed economic reforms, launched in 1989 after a financial crisis, have harmed Jordan's vulnerable groups, prompting the government to set up the DEF and other institutions to help ease poverty and unemployment.

Around 30 per cent of Jordan's 4.2 million people live

below the poverty line. Unemployment officially stands at 15 per cent while independent estimates have put it between 22 per cent and 27 per cent.

The fund focuses on "sustainable projects" in agricultural, industrial, vocational, services and tourism sectors.

It gives a maximum loan of JD10,000 with a grace period of one year and the rest should be paid in six years time on a monthly basis at a benefit rate of 6.5 per cent.

DEF loans have funded agricultural, industrial, tourism projects as well as vocational training and services.

Individuals can borrow up to JD 10,000 and are given a one-year grace period after

which they have to settle the loan over six years at a 6.5 per cent interest rate.

The DEF, Mr. Qabbah said, often encountered problems caused by the borrowers' lack of seriousness.

"Unfortunately, even though many graduated from different handicraft societies, they are not serious enough to start their own business. They want to find everything set for them without making any effort," he indicated.

"Others refuse to perform certain jobs that they are capable of doing because of cultural taboos," the DEF chief said.

He said the fund gave priority to funding projects in remote and "less fortunate"

areas of Jordan to boost development efforts and ease the plight of people.

"In many cases we visit these areas and advise people on how to start a project that best suits their areas," Mr. Qabbah said. "We also help them in managing the scheme and marketing products."

This year, the fund plans "to cooperate with intermediary organisations, such as charities, municipal council and other cooperatives to help identify needy families and lend them money to start a project," he explained.

"This method will be effective especially that there are certain areas where the DEF has no branches," he concluded.

Insurance companies asked to present views on new law

By Issam Qadmani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Industry and Trade has prepared a draft for a new insurance law and distributed copies to various insurance companies inviting them to put forth ideas and views to be discussed at a special seminar for which a date is yet to be fixed.

The ministry set March 2 as the deadline for these companies to submit their views and ideas to the ministry's department responsible for insurance issues.

It promised that all remarks and ideas will be taken into serious consideration because, it said, the ministry is concerned with working out a modern law that caters to the various requirements and needs of insurance in Jordan.

The draft law creates a

six-member special commission chaired by the minister of industry to organise the insurance sector.

The commission, which will enjoy financial and administrative independence, is to be entrusted with implementing the provisions of the law and carrying out plans designed to develop and promote the insurance industry, according to ministry sources.

The draft law grants the minister of industry and trade and the commission chairman wide powers to recommend to the Council of Ministers regulations and rules to organise the operations of insurance companies.

Under the provisions of the draft law, an insurance company which insures life cannot as well engage in other kinds of insurance.

Israel cuts interest rates to lowest level since August 1994

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's central bank cut interest rates on Monday from 12.9 per cent to 12.6 per cent, their lowest level since August 1994, after the country succeeded in reining in inflation last year.

"This is the lowest rate since August 1994 and it's possible because of the low inflation," Bank of Israel Governor Yaukov Frenkel told Israel Radio.

The reduction, which will

take effect on March 1, is in line with expectations but less than industry bosses had demanded to boost exports and economic growth.

The bank previously lowered its interest rate by half a percentage point to 12.9 per cent in January after inflation last year fell to a 30-year low of seven per cent, reflecting a sharp slowdown in economic growth.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARAKAT											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 23/02/1998											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV. %	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADS	VALUE TRADED JD	OFFER PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
346.000	250.000	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	2	40	13260	330.00	331.00	1.00	+
2.340	1.800	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	9	6450	11390	1.80	1.80	-	-
1.340	1.370	BANK OF JORDAN	4.4	0.00	4	3250	4498	1.37	1.39	0.02	+
1.380	1.890	MOR. EAST INV. BK.	66.3	0.00	1	50	51	1.00	1.01	0.01	+
2.680	1.650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.2	6.14	8	22300	37887	1.69	1.70	0.01	+
5.300	4.610	TUK HOUSING BK.	29.9	1.94	11	15700	78182	4.95	5.00	0.05	+
4.020	2.990	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.7	4.57	4	1576	3314	2.10	2.10	-	-
1.550	1.600	REIT. AL-MAL (BRIEF)	5	17.86	1	100	84	0.80	0.84	0.04	+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
2.210	1.990	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.0	7.08	3	3000	6340	2.10	2.12	0.02	+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
2.050	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	4.85	20	10800	22043	2.01	2.06	0.05	+
1.990	2.450	RYZEN MINERALS	21.2	3.72	2	75	314	2.99	4.15	1.16	+
1.550	1.930	MAXI. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	2	500	508	1.00	1.02	0.02	+
6.10	4.10	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	23.1	0.00	2	1950	859	4.4	4.5	0.1	+
6.900	6.700	ALRAI	15.7	7.71	4	400	3483	6.80	6.75	-0.05	-
4.000	2.870	ARAB INTL. INV. EDC.	10.5	0.00	9	4934	4802	0.93	0.94	0.01	+
1.090	1.000	ZARA EDUCATION	8.2	6.36	11	3550	6142	1.71	1.73	0.02	+
1.930	1.630	UNIONED CO.	9	0.00	3	750	514	0.69	0.68	-0.01	-
0.10	0.600	UNION LEAD DEV.	9	0.00	3	750	514	0.69	0.68	-0.01	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
4.450	2.690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	16.4	4.01	15	21023	57700	2.75	2.74	-0.01	-
4.140	3.040	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINS.	9.4	0.94	2	500	1700	3.45	3.40	-0.05	-
7.050	5.620	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.1	3.09	3	2050	12603	6.10	6.20	0.10	+
11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.0	8.63	15	14290	145931	10.14	10.30	0.16	+
2.710	1.280	ARAB FERT. INDUST.	10.1	0.00	1	100	100	1.34	1.32	-0.02	-
4.840	3.440	ARAB FERT. INDUST.	13.2	4.18	87	42549	201661	4.68	4.79	0.11	+
1.420	1.770	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	5	4440	3782	0.82	0.86	0.04	+
6.070	4.400	DAR ALDARA DV. INV.	14.3	0.27	30	12100	70513	5.80	5.85	0.05	+
3.590	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	9.5	0.00	39	70850	31783	4.3	4.5	0.2	+
6.10	4.000	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.5	0.00	39	70850	31783	4.3	4.5	0.2	+
1.190	1.680	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	24.1	0.00	8	11850	9273	0.75	0.79	0.04	+
1.060	1.370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	1	100	55	0.52	0.53	0.01	+
0.800	1.810	JOR. ROBERTSON INDUS.	9	0.00	1	100	55	0.52	0.53	0.01	+
2.450	1.380	UNIV. CHEM. INDUS.	13.1	6.90	1	100	145	1.43	1.45	0.02	+
3.000	0.920	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MPAC	25.5	0.00	44	64543	67289	1.02	1.06	0.04	+
1.780	1.530	JOR. SULPHUR-CHEM	9	0.00	59	51750	30508	0.57	0.60	0.03	+
1.570	1.150	ARAB FERT. INDUST.	16.3	5.47	41	15600	19576	1.22	1.28	0.06	+
1.760	0.810	UNIV. MOON INDUS.	10.2	13.16	2	350	96767	0.84	0.88	0.04	+
1.410	0.690	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	10.2	13.16	2	350	96767	0.84	0.88	0.04	+
1.620	1.380	ARAB FERT. INDUST.	13.9	4.76	2	350	96767	0.84	0.88	0.04	+
1.930	0.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	17.4	0.00	104	110328	103006	0.90	0.95	0.05	+
1.880	1.290	EL -RAY READY WEAR	48.6	0.00	8	5350	7380	1.34	1.38	0.04	+
1.250	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.4	0.00	7	5150	5952	1.16	1.17	0.01	+
1.200	0.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	47.7	0.00	13	6800	7043	1.00	1.05	0.05	+
0.810	0.660	JORDAN STEEL	32.6	6.94	46	127450	90414	0.69	0.72	0.03	+
0.840	0.570	MID-EAST COMPLEX	8.0	15.38	53	149300	94861	0.62	0.65	0.03	+
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
112.73	112.73	INDEX	112.73	112.73	669	835073	1068492				
GRAND TOTAL											
167.62	167.62	INDEX	167.62	167.62	790	922330	1309353				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 23/02/1998											
1.050	0.960	EXPORT & FIN. BNC. 75%	0.00	0.00	9	12150	9118	0.96	1.00	0.04	+
1.540	1.540	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.1	0.00	34	91250	34675	0.98	1.00	0.02	+
0.660	0.660	NATL. COMMER. CENTERS	0.00	0.00	3	2650	1276	0.48	0.49	0.01	+
0.660	0.660	UNION INV. 50%	0.00	0.00	22	90600	19932	0.72	0.72	-	-
0.620	0.620	ARAB FERT. INDUST.	0.00	0.00	8	6000	2745	0.44	0.46	0.02	+
0.640	0.640	ARAB FOOD & MED.	0.00	0.00	6	11632	4853	0.40	0.40	-	-
0.480	0.480	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	28.8	0.00	19	34459	8613	0.24	0.25	0.01	+
0.550	0.550	NATL. TEXTILE	0.00	0.00	5	2050	605	0.29	0.29	-	-
0.660	0.660	NATL. TEXT. IND. NAKKO	0.00	0.00	38	90480	3576	0.39	0.39	-	-
0.630	0.630	NAZAK DIES & MOUTLS	0.00	0.00	3	141	48	0.33	0.35	0.02	+
0.670	0.670	MID-EAST PHARM. 90%	0.00	0.00	3	6000	3120	0.61	0.62	0.01	+
0.730	0.730	RAZI PHARM.	0.00	0.00	9	42150	30066	0.70	0.70	-	-
0.460	0.460	IND. ENG.	0.00	0.00	9	8950	2417	0.26	0.27	0.01	+
0.830	0.830	IND. CERAMIC	14.2	0.00	7	5000	2700	0.53	0.54	0.01	+
0.950	0.950	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	0.00	0.00	19	21412	13705	0.64	0.64	-	-
0.950	0.950	IND. CERAMIC	0.00	0.00	3	1500	1350	0.53	0.54	0.01	+
0.950	0.950	OPTICAL HEARING 75%	0.00	0.00	13	33450	7809	0.47	0.49	0.02	+
1.000	0.660	NAT. ALUMINUM. 75%	96.0	0.00	5	5725	2520	0.68	0.69	0.01	+
1.400	0.720	ARAB INT. FOOD FAC.	48.2	0.00	1	200	200	1.00	1.00	-	-
1.310	1.000	HYDROGEN	0.00	0.00	13	6950	785	0.13	0.13	-	-
1.000	0.750	EXCAL PRINT CO. 75%	0.00	0.00	1	5000	2600	0.77	0.77	-	-
GRAND TOTAL											
230	230	INDEX	230	230	478916	191968					

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You tend to favour the scientific approach rather than the emotional. If there's an argument between these two, that's the side you would be on — but it's not necessarily the winning side. In fact, it looks like they're evenly matched. So listen to both and maybe act as referee. You're good at that, and you'd learn a lot.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) People are trying to tell you what to do. Most of the time, you manage to get along just fine without their input. That might not be an option today, however. It looks like a person who's trying to change your life is in a position to do so. Instead of putting up a fuss, just wait. You could have the last laugh after all.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You're stronger, more confident and decisive, able to concentrate on the work at hand. Are visitors coming over tonight? You'd probably better be prepared just in case. Your spouse could be bringing the boss home for dinner. Go pick up something gourmet, which you can pretend you cooked.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) The very thing you least want to get involved with could be the key to your success. It's like having to learn to type so you can get a job, so you can buy a new car. In that case, learning to type equals a new car. It's that sort of situation you'll find yourself in today. Might as well relax and enjoy it.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Court makes it easier for landlords to evict tenants

AMMAN'S COURT of First Instance has ruled that any company in the Kingdom will be considered in violation of a rent agreement if it amends or adds to the stated purposes of the business while the rent agreement is in force. Any change is an ultimate cause to request the eviction of the rented premises, the court ruled.

Munther Hammo, a lawyer, said the principle established by the court is very serious as it touches upon the rights of companies which rent premises for administrative purposes only. He explained that if the ruling is endorsed by the courts of appeal and cassation, it would mean that amending or adding any additional purpose to the operations of a company is a cause for eviction from its premises (Al Ra'i).

Cooperative corporation posts surplus

THE JORDANIAN Cooperative Corporation has achieved a surplus in its 1997 balance sheet as a result of carrying out some productive and service projects. An official source said the JD100,000 surplus was achieved for the first time since the early 1980s as the corporation has been recording a yearly deficit of between JD300,000 and JD400,000.

The source expected the surplus to increase after operating some troubled project such as the raising and fattening

Marketing firm still losing

THE JORDAN Marketing Company posted a JD123,800 loss last year compared to a JD724,500 loss in 1996. However, the net losses to be carried forward have reached JD1.09 million after being at JD961,200 in 1996.

The total current assets declined from JD1.06 million in 1996 to JD825,000 last year while total assets dropped to JD938,200 from JD1.2 million. The net shareholders' equity also fell to JD571,300 from JD695,100.

The board of directors indicated in the 1997 annual report that the company's operations which started from the beginning of 1997 was abruptly halted when a committee appointed by the Central Bank of Jordan took over the management of

the Amman Bank for Investment in March 1997. The committee stopped all lines of credit to the company and demanded all outstanding facilities be repaid.

The report said the company was unable to obtain credit from other banks due to the company's JD0.5 million of direct and indirect indebtedness to the Amman Bank for Investment which also held more than 82 per cent of company's equity.

The board of directors recommends to the general assembly, which is to meet Saturday, restructuring the company through increasing its shares in the free open market and opening new markets (Al Ra'i).

Indian businessman lured by Jordan's QIZ

By Ghali Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — It started with a Business Week article on Jordan's Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) and ended with Indian Fakhrudin Amiji, 53, deciding to expand his multi-million dollar regional garment industry by opening shop in Jordan.

Mr. Amiji, based in Dubai's sprawling Jabel Ali Free Zone, owns one of the largest garment manufacturers and exporters operating in the Middle East, with an annual turnover of \$100 million. In addition, he has production sites in Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait.

If all goes well, Jordan's Qualifying Industrial Zone in Irbid will be a new production site for Mr. Amiji's ATRACO Industrial Enterprises, employing 2,000 workers and manufacturing casual wear for men, women and children.

"We are keen on investing in Jordan. We have a good impression about the country, the clean highways, nice hotels, and the kind people who speak good English," he told the Jordan Times Monday.

Mr. Amiji said that privileges offered by the QIZ, including free access to U.S. markets without reciprocity, the country's cheap labour and a zero quota on textile exports had prompted him to open a factory in Jordan as part of expansion plans.

"There are some restrictions on our exports to the U.S. because of the quota

and the labour is expensive because it's usually imported," he said.

"But in Jordan, labour is cheaper and the cost of living is lower than in Palestine or in Israel," he said.

Mr. Amiji said Jordan's bureaucracy and red tape procedures were his only concern about opening up a business in Jordan — common views aired by most foreign investors.

The QIZ, established at Irbid's Al Hassan Industrial Zone, is at the heart of U.S.-Israeli-Jordanian efforts to deliver an elusive peace dividend to many of Jordan's disenchanted population.

Jordan and Israel, in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, signed the agreement designating the QIZ at a controversial Middle East and North Africa economic conference held in Doha late November.

But many feel bitter that the privilege of having free access to the U.S. market will come at the expense of involving at least 11 per cent input from Israel or the Palestinian market — economically held captive by the Jewish state.

However, others see the QIZ, housing 54 plans, as promising new markets for products manufactured in Irbid and providing over 1,500 jobs for the Kingdom's growing unemployed.

Mr. Amiji said he hoped the garment facility, to be built on a total area of 5,000 square metres, will

provide over 600 jobs to local workers operating 300 machines.

Mr. Amiji, whose main clients include American brand names such as GAP, Banana Republic, Wal-Mart, K-Mart and Fruit of the Loom, will be competing with over 30 textile factories at QIZ.

The QIZ agreement will come into full force in two weeks.

ATRACO, currently producing around 20 million pieces a year, is keen on exporting a high quality

service by providing training and know-how to workers.

Behind QIZ was a conglomerate, Century Investment Group — a Jordanian public shareholding company with an estimated equity value of more than \$100 million.

The group is employing 1,200 employees at its 12 factories established at the QIZ — all a 50/50 partnership basis with world multi-nationals.

On Monday, Mr. Amiji investigated Jordan's

investment climate.

Thuraya Salti, researcher of the National Competitiveness Team at the Ministry of Planning, briefed Mr. Amiji on Jordan's textile industry and its competitiveness on world markets.

Later, he visited the Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC) and got a comprehensive briefing on the services provided by IPC to foreign investors who can now have a 100 per cent equity ownership in Jordan.

GALLERIA

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3.30 - 6.15 - 8.30 - 10.45 3.30 - 6.30 - 8.30 - 10.30

Shakeout in Asia's PC market seen worsening

SINGAPORE (AFP) — A shakeout in Asia's personal computer manufacturing business is expected to worsen due to regional financial turbulence stemming from the currency crisis, industry officials and analysts have said.

"I think there will be more to come," Paul Chan, Asia-Pacific managing director of U.S. giant Compaq Computer Corp., told reporters when asked whether more computer companies would exit the scene because of the crisis.

Many local personal computer companies in the region had folded up in the aftermath of the rapid depreciation of regional currencies against the U.S. dollar since July last year.

"What is obvious is that where companies find they cannot compete profitably in any specific place then they will be forced to take radical action which may result in companies exiting from the marketplace," Mr. Chan said at a media briefing on Compaq's 1997 financial results.

"You have seen a number of companies actually exiting right here in Singapore," he said, without giving names.

KT Technology Pte. Ltd., Singapore's aggressive personal computer maker in the early 90's, is among those which bowed out of the scene recently.

Mr. Chan said Compaq, reputedly the largest global supplier of personal computers and which chalked up a 41 per cent worldwide net income growth to \$1.85 billion in 1997, was unlikely to be hit hard by the crisis because of strong demand

and presence in the United States and Europe.

Compaq does not give a regional breakdown of its profits due to competitive reasons.

Mr. Chan pointed out that very large companies which had been leaders in the computer industry had found it tough to compete in certain segments of the personal computer industry, citing the consumer segment as an example.

He said that one indication that "industry consolidation" was accelerating amid financial turmoil in Asia was the estimated 10 percentage point increase in global market share of the top four companies.

"The actual truth is that in many of the Asian countries, products are becoming more expensive because of the depreciation of the local currencies," he said, forecasting that personal computer shipments to Asia in 1998 would be "much lower" than projected.

U.S.-based market research firm International Data Corp. (IDC) had forecast in December last year that 1998 growth in personal computer shipments to Asia from last year would dip to 16 per cent from 18 per cent in 1997.

But the 1998 figure is expected to be revised in a fortnight because of the negative impact of the regional financial turmoil over the last two months.

"The figure will be lower than projected because of the regional crisis," said Gerald Tan, analyst with the IDC Asia-Pacific office in Singapore.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8020	0.8008	1.4538	128.07	1.4240	1773.80	2.0281	6.0337
DE Mark	0.5549	1.0000	0.3378	0.8087	71.16	0.7303	984.90	1.1285	3.3612
GB Sterling	1.6427	2.9903	1.0000	2.3885	210.46	2.3392	2915.24	3.3332	9.9164
CH Franc	0.6879	1.2354	0.4180	1.0000	88.06	0.9790	1220.62	139.90	4.1624
JP Yen	0.0078	1.4056	0.4748	1.1341	1.0000	1.1110	13.87	168.42	4.7142
CA Dollar	0.7022	1.2581	0.4226	1.0123	1.11	1.0000	1241.24	1.4181	4.2184
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0133	0.3420	0.8017	1399.88	0.8006	1.00	11.42	3.3954
NL Guilder	0.4931	88.73	0.2895	71.66	63.04	0.7011	874.99	1.00	2.9734
FR Franc	0.1667	0.2879	0.1008	24.0304	21.18	0.2355	33.58	33.5800	1.00

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7508	0.3770	3.6395	0.3045	3.6727	1628.00	3.4000
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2898	0.5317	5.1333	0.4296	5.1601	2165.15	4.7965
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0812	0.98	407.41	0.9065
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	1.8808	9.8491	1.0000	9.68	0.8078	9.74	4083.37	9.0193
Qatar Dinar	0.2748	0.1948	1.0305	1.0305	1.0000	0.0837	1.01	419.84	0.9342
Kuwait Dinar	3.2841	2.3284	12.3169	1.2380	11.95	1.0000	12.06	6018.06	0.9342
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0225	0.9910	0.0829	1.01	416.04	0.9267
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4640	2.4545	0.2487	2.3819	0.1993	2.4038	1.00	2.2261
Egyptian	0.2941	0.2085	1.1031	0.1109	1.0704	0.0896	1.0802	449.41	1.00

Energy				
Oil	Last	Previous		
Brent	13.89	13.87		
W. Texas	16.72	16.69		
Bonny	13.89	13.87		
Dubai	11.73	12.39		
UL Gas	156.00	160.00		

JOD Cross Rates				
Currency	Buy	Sell		
US Dollar	0.709	0.710		
GB Sterling	1.1579	1.1637		
DE Mark	0.3878	0.3897		
CH Franc	0.4796	0.482		
FR Franc	0.1157	0.1163		
JP Yen	0.8495	0.8522		
NL Guilder	0.3441	0.3458		
IT Lira	0.2935	0.2965		

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4805	0.16222	0.38787
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.49686	0.16586	0.39646
KW Dinar	3.2841	6.91716	1.998	4.77783
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.78011	1.61394	3.8625
CY Pound	1.888	3.3993	1.1477	2.7428

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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Rusedski claims 1st title in five months

ANTWERP (AFP) — Greg Rusedski, who will be one of the favourites in the ATP's new London event next week, got a pre-tournament boost Sunday when he won his first title in five months by defeating defending champion Marc Rosset of Switzerland 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 in the final of the \$1 million European Community Championship here on Sunday.

The 24-year-old, ninth-ranked British player, who last won a title in Basel last October has now won six events during his career.

Rosset, 27, who beat Rusedski's compatriot Tim Henman in last year's final, showed early determination, saving three break points in the fourth game of the opening set to frustrate Rusedski for 2-2. But he twice needed treatment for a blistered thumb in the second set.

"I think I competed well," said Rusedski after his win.

"The court was a little slow for indoors and you have to mix it up otherwise, even if you get your serve in.

guys can get to the return.

The Canada-born British No. 1 described the victory as "one of the biggest" of his career — "along with Basle."

"Those are two of the most important indoor events in the world."

Rusedski got the chance to handle the million-dollar diamond-encrusted gold racket during the awards ceremony. The trophy becomes the property of any player who wins the Antwerp title three times in five years.

Only former World No. 1 Ivan Lendl in the 1980s has ever taken away the trophy.

"It would be great for my house," Rusedski joked. "But you can't talk about getting it until you have at least two titles. I hope to be back next year to defend."

"It was pretty heavy, that's for sure. It's a special thing and I'm sure Lendl cherishes his."



Britain's Greg Rusedski holds his trophy after winning the final of the European Community Championship in Antwerp. Rusedski defeated Swiss Marc Rosset 7-6 3-6 6-1 6-4 (Reuters photo)

Coach calls for drugs to be legalised

LONDON (AFP) — Former top athletics coach Wilf Paish has called for the legalisation of performance-enhancing drugs in sport.

Paish, who coached Tessa Sanderson to a gold medal in the javelin at the 1984 Olympics and who was also in charge of the South African team in Atlanta, made his comments on a BBC television programme Sunday.

"We should see drug-taking as an acceptable way of enhancing performance in sport," said the 65-year-old Paish.

"The (doping) rules as they are applied now simply do not work, and I say they should be scrapped."

"Even the infamous steroids have been shown to be safe when taken on their own and under supervision. Meanwhile, many top athletes are taking banned drugs and getting away with it. I say, why be hypocrites?"

Paish, who has also worked with the England cricket team and Halifax rugby league side, said athletes would continue to take a chance with drugs because the rewards for success are so high.

His comments follow similar calls for the acceptance of drugs by South African sports scientist John Hawley and Argentinian researcher Claudio Tamburini.

"The ban on doping is paternalistic because the main reason advanced for the ban is to protect the sportsman's health," said Tamburini.

"No one would dream of sanctioning career-minded people who work too hard and ruin their health."

"Elite sport is now a profession like any other. Athletes should decide for themselves how much risk they are willing to take."

"The ban on doping is also unworkable because athletes, like other professionals, will always try to better themselves. If society finds it unacceptable to limit development in other professions, then it is also unacceptable to place limits on athletes."

Samaranch unapologetic about cost of Olympic bid

WASHINGTON (AFP) — International Olympics Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch shrugged off criticism that cities must spend lavishly to win their bids to host Olympic Games.

In a television interview that aired late Sunday, Samaranch acknowledged that it would be "not easy" and "quite difficult" for a city to clinch the Olympics if it were unwilling to pay dearly for the privilege.

"But if they are getting the games, they will receive a lot of money," Samaranch, 77, told CBS television.

CBS' weekly news programme "60 Minutes" also raised questions about the selection of the 118-member IOC Committee.

It noted that members have included commercial sponsors of the games, a defence minister under former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, a former member of the Korean intelligence service, and Russian President Boris Yeltsin's former tennis coach and sports minister, who reportedly made a fortune in tobacco and alcohol.

CBS also pointed out that Samaranch held high office in the Spanish regime of dictator Francisco Franco.

Asked if he had any apologies for serving under Franco for three decades, Samaranch responded: "I am very proud of my present. I am very proud of my past."



Maria Mutola of Mozambique celebrates after she set a new women's indoor world record in the 800 metres in Lievin, northern France (Reuters photo)

Mutola breaks Wachtel's decade old world record

LIEVIN (AFP) — Mozambique's triple world indoor champion Maria Mutola broke the 10-year-old world indoor 800 metres record here on Sunday in a time of 1 minute 56.36 seconds.

The 25-year-old, who also took the outdoor world 800 metres title in 1993, broke the previous record set by Christine Wachtel of East Germany in 1988 of 1:56.40.

Mutola, who retained her world indoor title last year only weeks after returning home when her father was

killed in a car crash, said that she had always programmed this meeting to break the record.

"I used Stockholm's meeting on Thursday as a practice run, but it was here that I had targeted to break the record," Mutola said.

Morocco's dual world indoor champion Hicham El Guerrouj, who claimed the 1500 metres outdoor title last year, blamed being tired from Ramadan for missing out on breaking his own 1500 metres world record by just nine tenths of a second.



South Africa's Brendan Augustin (R) fights for the ball with Morocco's Youssef February 22, during the quarter-final of the African Nations Cup soccer tournament in Ouagadougou stadium. South Africa beat Morocco 2-1 (Reuters photo)

South Africa win clash of Nations Cup giants

African Nations Cup schedule

• Feb 25 — Semi-finals: Democratic Republic of Congo v South Africa, August 4 Stadium, Ouagadougou 1600 GMT; Burkina Faso v Egypt, Omnisport Stadium, Bobo-Dioulasso 2000

• Feb 27 — Third-place playoff, Municipal Stadium, Ouagadougou 1600

• Feb 28 — Final, August 4 Stadium 1600

Leading African Nations Cup scorers

5 — Benni McCarthy (South Africa), Hossam Hassan (Egypt)
4 — Joel Tiehi (Ivory Coast)
3 — Tondelua Mbulua (Democratic Republic of Congo), Souleymane Oulare (Guinea), Alphonse Tchami (Cameroon)

range header found the net.

Billed as the clash of the giants because South Africa are the defending champions and Morocco are ranked No. 1 in Africa by world controlling body FIFA, the match was open, entertaining and tense.

After an even first half, Morocco took territorial control without seriously troubling goalkeeper Brian Baloyi and the winner came against the run of play.

McCarthy was repeatedly caught offside in the second half by a well-drilled Moroccan defence but the

North Africans missed injured leading scorer Salaheddine Bassir. Morocco brought on Ahmed Bahja for disappointing playmaker Mustapha Hadji and Abderrahim Ouakili for Ali al-Khatnabi in the closing stages as South Africa retreated.

Bafana Bafana (The Boys) had defender Andrew Rabutla sent off in injury time for a late tackle and he will miss the semi-final against the Democratic Republic of Congo here on Wednesday.

George aims at indoor vault record

ADELAIDE (AFP) — An indoor athletics meet has been scheduled for here next month in a bid to give Australian pole vault wonder Emma George a chance to retrieve her world indoor record.

After breaking her own world outdoor record of 4.55 metres with a vault of 4.57m in Auckland last weekend, 23-year-old George will be given the chance to regain the indoor record from Iceland's Vala Flosadottir, who holds the current mark at 4.44m.

George previously held the indoor record at 4.40m but that has broken several times since the start of the recent European indoor season. The Adelaide indoor meet will be held on March 7.

SCOREBOARD

NBA

New York	92	Houston	74
Milwaukee	79	Cleveland	71
Toronto	113	Vancouver	105 (OT)
Minnesota	113	Sacramento	95
Orlando	96	LA Lakers	94
Indiana	97	Philadelphia	92
Miami	90	Golden State	82
Phoenix	97	San Antonio	79
Seattle	88	Denver	68
Portland	121	Boston	96

Serie A

Bari	2	Lecce	2
Bologna	3	Piacenza	0
Brescia	2	Atalanta	2
Florentina	3	Juventus	0
Lazio	3	Inter Milan	0
AC Milan	3	Empoli	1
Napoli	0	AS Roma	2
Sampdoria	0	Udinese	3
Parma	2	Vicenza	1

Belgian League

Standard Liege	3	Aalst	0
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Spanish First Division

Real Betis	1	Espanyol	3
Salamanca	3	Merida	1
Real Sociedad	2	Oviedo	2
Valencia	2	Celta Vigo	1
D. La Coruna	3	Athletic Bilbao	0
Mallorca	2	Racing Santander	1
Barcelona	2	Compostela	0

Greek Championship

Athinaikos	0	Panathinaikos	3
Olympiakos	2	PAOK	0
Heraklis	3	OFI	1
Kavala	2	Xanthi	0
Panahaiiki	1	Apollon	0
Ethnikos	1	Pyrros	0
Kalamata	3	Proodeftiki	1
Veria	4	Panionios	0

English Premiership

Newcastle	1	Leeds	1
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Hanover WTA Tour

Patty Schnyder (Swi) bt Jana Novotna (Cze x1)
6-0, 2-6, 7-5

European Community Championship

Greg Rusedski (Gbr x5) bt Marc Rosset (Swi)
7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 6-1, 6-4

Memphis ATP Tour

Mark Philippoussis (Aus x4) bt Michael Chang (USA x2), 6-3, 6-2

Turkish League

C. Dardanel	1	Gaziantepspor	0
Vanspor	1	Istanbulspor	1
Genclerbirligi	1	Samsunspor	1
Kocaelispor	2	Karabukspor	3
Antalyaspor	1	Galatasaray	3
Fenerbahce	1	Kayserispor	2

Friendly international

Saudi Arabia	0	Germany	3
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Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH		EAST	
♠ 6	♠ A 7 8 9	♠ A 7 8 9	♠ A 10 9 8
♥ K Q 6 3	♥ A 10 9 8	♥ A 10 9 8	♥ A 10 9 8
♦ K 4 3	♦ A 10 9 8	♦ A 10 9 8	♦ A 10 9 8
♣ K 9 8	♣ A 10 9 8	♣ A 10 9 8	♣ A 10 9 8

The bidding:
SOUTH: 1NT
NORTH: 2NT
SOUTH: 3NT
NORTH: 4NT
SOUTH: 5NT
NORTH: 6NT
SOUTH: 7NT
NORTH: 7NT

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

It might seem that this bit of advice is redundant, but we are constantly amazed at the number of declarers who misread the hand and take a line that would prevent them from making the contract. The solution is quite simple. The red suits had to be led from dummy to stop East from capturing an honor and shifting to a spade. Declarer crossed to the table with a low club to the nine at trick two. Does it make any difference which red suit South leads first?

You bet! A diamond would be a subtle error. East can rise with the ace and return a spade, and because of the 4-1 break declarer can score only two tricks in the suit for a total of eight — two spade tricks, two diamonds and four clubs.

You declarer elected to lead a low heart. East could not rise with the ace — that would prevent declarer with three tricks in the suit. After the jack won, declarer returned to dummy with a club to lead a diamond. Again East could not afford to take the ace, so South's queen became the second red suit trick. Declarer now reverted to hearts to secure nine tricks before the defense can collect five.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144 PHILADELPHIA "1" Pierce Brosnan as James Bond 007...TOMORROW NEVER DIES Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 634144 PHILADELPHIA "2" DRAGON HEART Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 PINOCCHIO Shows: 12:30 Thursdays and Fridays only	CINEMA TEL: 699238 PLAZA I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 5677420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" MR. BEAN Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430 GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN MEG RYAN IN ADDICTED TO LOVE Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430 GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN CLINT EASTWOOD IN ABSOLUTE POWER Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155 NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For reservations call: 640155, 625155
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Super sub rescues point for Newcastle

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — Newcastle's Temur Ketsbaia scored a dramatic late equaliser within a minute of coming off the bench to cancel out a stunning goal by Leeds' Rodney Wallace in a pulsating 1-1 draw here on Sunday.

With Newcastle trailing to Wallace's 82nd minute strike, Georgian midfielder Ketsbaia grabbed a vital point for struggling Newcastle with a speculative 30-yard drive two minutes from time.

Leeds goalkeeper Nigel Martyn, who had an outstanding game otherwise, buried his head in his hands after his only mistake in 90 minutes allowed the ball to squirm underneath him and into the net.

But the goal and the point it secured was no more than Newcastle deserved from an open, attacking game which made a mockery of both sides' reputations for boring football.

Newcastle had a golden chance to take the lead after just three minutes when two of the club's recent signings combined to carve open the Leeds defence.

Swedish striker Andreas Andersson, bought from AC Milan last month, burst into the left of the area and cut the ball back for former Everton and Leeds midfielder Gary Speed who failed to make clean contact on the ball from five yards out.

Shearer was inches away from finding the breakthrough on 18 minutes when he saw his ferocious left-foot shot brilliantly tipped onto the bar by Martyn.

Two minutes later the England striker was once again denied by the Leeds keeper, who palmed a looping far post header over the bar.

But Leeds were making their own contribution to a highly entertaining start to the game and they should have taken the lead when Bruno Ribeiro cut the ball back for Wallace who scuffed his shot wide from close range.

Former England full back Stuart Pearce then forced another smart save from Martyn when he bent a low free kick around the defensive wall after Shearer had been fouled on the edge of the area.

Five minutes before the interval, Northern Ireland winger Keith Gillespie burst down the right flank and his inch-perfect cross was met by Andersson at the near post but his well struck drive flashed inches past.

The game continued to flow in the second period with both sides creating a string of half chances, but it was the visitors who came closest to a goal when Wallace smashed a ferocious 20 yard volley which was tipped onto the Newcastle cross bar by keeper Shay Given.

The game deserved a goal and no-one more than Shearer deserved to score it.

Ten minutes from time the England captain was presented with a chance which nine times out of ten he would have buried, but his powerful header was beaten out brilliantly by Martyn.

And within two minutes, Shearer had good reason to regret his miss when Wallace fired the winner for Leeds with a flying scissor's kick from 10 yards out.

But that was not the end of the drama as Ketsbaia came off the bench to grab his last gasp equaliser.



Swiss tennis player Patty Schnyder returns a ball to Czech Jana Novotna during their final match at the Women Tennis Association (WTA) in Hanover (Reuters photo)

Schnyder shocks Novotna to take 2nd title

HANOVER (AFP) — Unseeded Swiss starlet Patty Schnyder saved two match points on her way to her second WTA title here on Sunday, beating top seed Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic 6-0, 2-6, 7-5.

The 19-year-old, who won in Hobart in January, took full advantage in the first set of a below-par Novotna, who had pulled a stomach muscle in Saturday's semi-final with Anna Kournikova.

Schnyder broke the Czech's serve three times to take it 6-0.

However, Novotna, ranked third in the world, hit back in the second, breaking for 5-2, and served out to level the match.

The third set produced a remarkable turnaround with Schnyder, who reached last year's Italian semi-finals, coming back from 4-5 and two match points down to lead 6-5 after six deuces on her serve.

A visibly tiring Novotna, 29, saved one match point but overhit an easy smash to give Schnyder the title after almost two hours.

West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers Riyadi win crucial match, play Syria's Wihdeh today Jazireh score easy 96-26 win over Mina'

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Lebanon's Al Riyadi Monday overcame Iranian champions Zobohan 89-80 to win the opening match at the 1st West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers which opened here with five teams taking part.

Jordan's Al Jazireh had no trouble in their match as they sailed by Yemen's Al Mina' 96-26 in the late game. The hosts romped to an expected victory after leading 19-0 in the first six minutes and won the first half 47-18.

Al Riyadi led 50-41 at halftime and their players dazzled the fans with varied dunks as they mounted a fast attack to maintain the lead throughout the second half at 75-62 and 83-69 before the Iranians slightly narrowed the gap but failed to catch up.

The opening day matches were attended by Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sa'at Al Hassan, and the ambassadors of Iran and Yemen.

Syria's Al Wihdeh will play Al Riyadi in their first match at 4 p.m. today in an important tie that will somewhat determine the chances of two teams, Al Mina' and Zobohan in the late match.

It is still early to anticipate who will win the sole qualifying berth to the Asian Clubs Championship which will be held in Malaysia April 25-May 2, but outsiders expect Al Riyadi, Zobohan and Al Jazireh to be the favourites.

Al Jazireh Arameh, the Kingdom's reigning champions are hosting the Feb. 23-27 event amid preparations to retain the Kingdom's title which they won last year ending a 30-year domination by rivals Orthodoxy and Al Ahli.

Four referees from the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) are on hand for the tournament televised live on JTV and Future TV of Lebanon.

Arameh has undertaken the cost of accommodation for the teams and is the sole sponsor at an estimated cost of JD20,000.

The Asian Clubs Championship will include 10 titleholding Asian teams: the top four from the last championship, one each from the ABC's five zones and the host nation.

The ABC five zones are: Middle Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia and the Gulf.

Al Jazireh's lineup has been boosted by the experience of Al Ahli's veteran playmaker Samir Marqus who returned to the game after signing with Al Jazireh after a two-season retirement.

Al Riyadi have three professionals on their lineup. The Iranian team also boasts two Yugoslav pros and the Syrian team includes veteran national team players including Anwar Abdul Hay and Tarif Qutash.

Referring to the fact that the ABC allows foreign players in such tournaments, chief of Al Jazireh Arameh's organising committee Fadi Ghandour noted that he wanted no change on his lineup which will soon compete for the Kingdom's title.

"We have confidence in our team, and our plans are long-term. We do not work for a particular championship only."

Arameh's sponsorship was the underlying reason which enabled Al Jazireh to be crowned the Kingdom's champions after playing in the second division only a decade ago.

This year, the team will travel to Malaysia if they win the qualifiers. The agenda also includes the Arab Clubs Championships in Beirut March 23-April 2.

Ghandour said holding the qualifiers in Amman were part of celebrations marking Arameh's 15 years of operation adding that the tournament was open to the Jordanian public free of charge.

"This is our gift for Jordanian basketball fans as it is not often that we host events, grouping Arab champion teams."

Al Jazireh's lineup includes five national team players including Husam Lutfi, Muta'an Odeh and Naser Alawneh. Muta'asem Salameh and Ghaith Ennabi are missing the event.

Al Orthodoxy and Al Ahli had previously taken part in the Asian Clubs Championship, with Al Ahli securing the best Jordanian showing with a fourth place finish in 1995.

Al Jazireh won the Kingdom's basketball crown in 1997 leaving traditional rivals Al Ahli in second place and Al Orthodoxy third.

Al Orthodoxy had an undisputed reign from 1976-1989. Al Ahli won the title in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994 while Al Orthodoxy came back to win in 1995 and 1996 and are currently preparing to get back the title.

Philippoussis beats Chang for title

MEMPHIS (AFP) — Fourth-seed Mark Philippoussis of Australia spoiled American Michael Chang's 26th birthday Sunday by defeating the second seed and defending champion 6-3, 6-2 in the ATP Tour final here.

Philippoussis, 21, broke Chang three times en route to his fifth career ATP Tour title and his first since his Stella Artois Championships triumph in London last June.

The victory was worth \$120,000 to the Australian who had lost all four of his previous career matches against the American.

Philippoussis, who won three titles on three different surfaces last season, will jump from 16th to a career-high 13th in next week's ATP rankings.

Chang saw his 1998 record fall to 8 wins against three defeats.

Seattle defeat Denver; Spurs lose

ORLANDO (AP) — Nick Anderson's 3-pointer with 7.1 seconds remaining capped a 30-point performance Sunday and gave the Orlando Magic a 96-94 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

A crowd of 17,238 booed virtually every time O'Neal touched the ball and cheered wildly each time he missed a shot and committed a foul.

O'Neal finished with 20 points and 10 rebounds.

New York Knicks 92, Houston Rockets 74: In New York, John Starks scored 13 of his 24 points in a burst

at the start of the fourth quarter to carry the New York Knicks over the Houston Rockets.

Milwaukee Bucks 79, Cleveland Cavaliers 71: Glenn Robinson scored 29 points and Ray Allen scored eight of his 20 in the fourth quarter as Milwaukee beat Cleveland.

Seattle Supersonics 88, Denver Nuggets 68: Greg Anthony had a season-high 15 points, including three 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, as the Seattle Supersonics handed the Denver Nuggets

their seventh straight loss.

Phoenix Suns 97, San Antonio Spurs 79: At Phoenix, Danny Manning and Dennis Scott came off the bench to spark a big fourth quarter for Phoenix, which won its season-best fifth straight.

Pacers 97, 76ers 92: In Philadelphia, Reggie Miller scored 19 of his 25 points in the second half and hit a key 3-pointer with two minutes left as Indiana beat Philadelphia 97-92 for the second time in four days and ninth time in a row.

The pace begins to tell as top teams crash

PARIS (AFP) — Europe's top teams found that the pace was beginning to tell when they crashed to shock league defeats this weekend.

Juventus and Inter Milan were beaten in Italy. Real Madrid dropped off of the top of the Spanish first division when they went down in a seven-goal thriller in Tenerife despite twice taking the lead. And in France pacesetters Marseille, Metz and Monaco didn't earn a point between them.

Italian champions Juventus stuttered to a humiliating 3-0 defeat at Fiorentina on Sunday while rivals Inter Milan also crumbled to a 3-0 loss to Lazio, who went second on goal difference to gatecrash the race to this season's Italian league title.

Juventus, beaten 1-0 by Lazio in the midweek Italian Cup semi-finals, badly missed central defenders Ciro Ferrara, through injury, and Mark Iuliano, through suspension.

They also struggled with coach Marcello Lippi's decision to a field Alessandro Del Piero as the only striker in the first half.

Aldo Fricano nodded in Fiorentina's first and Belgian international Luis Oliveira slotted home the second in the 34th minute after Gabriel Batistuta rounded Juventus' keeper Angelo Peruzzi and knocked the ball back.

Substitute Anselmo Robbati added the third with 12 minutes left as Fiorentina beat Juventus for the first time since 1992, and avenged last month's Italian Cup defeat to the Turin club.

Lippi admitted: "We deserved to lose. Fiorentina played well and we certainly didn't. Perhaps I didn't explain myself clearly enough, but we were too defensive. We sometimes had five defenders in a line and that's not what I wanted. Fabio Pecchia and Zinedine Zidane, who should have been supporting Del Piero, were coming back too often."

Lazio, who have won 13

and drawn two in their last 15 cup and league games, outclassed Inter in front of a 70,000 crowd at the Olympic Stadium.

Diego Fuser tucked the ball past Inter keeper Gianluca Pagliuca in the 25th minute and a glancing header from Croatian international Aleks Boks made it 2-0 before the break.

Inter libero Salvatore Fiesi handed Lazio the third by trying to dribble past Pierluigi Casiraghi. Italy's World Cup centre forward won the tackle and deftly planted the ball inside Pagliuca's far post.

Inter, whose only positive note came from Nigerian substitute Nwankwo Kanu, had Mauro Milanese sent off for sarcastically applauding the referee for having booked him in injury time.

In Spain, FC Barcelona on Sunday made the most of Real Madrid's slip-up 24 hours earlier, by scoring a 2-0 home victory over Compestela. But they needed to steady, frayed nerves when Rivaldo missed a penalty after just fifteen minutes.

Real Madrid went down 4-3 in Tenerife in a match which saw three players sent off and three of the goals coming from penalties.

In other matches third-placed Real Sociedad were held 2-2 at home by Oviedo while Majorca beat visiting Racing Santander 2-1 — all of the goals coming in the last seven minutes.

French leaders Marseille, beaten in a five-goal thriller at home by Auxerre in the French League Cup quarter-finals earlier in the week, slipped for a second time in front of their fans when they crashed to a shock 1-0 defeat against Rennes.

Stephane Gregoire scored the only goal of the match on the hour to give Rennes their first away win of the season.

Despite the defeat Marseille stayed top alongside Metz, who were also beaten in the League Cup in midweek by Paris St Germain. Both clubs have 50 points from 27 matches.

Metz, hoping to put their League Cup defeat behind them, went down 2-1 at Le Havre.

Bastia, with seven of their first choice players missing from their lineup because of either injury or suspension, plundered maximum points with a 1-0 home win over champions Monaco.

Monaco were sunk thanks to an opportunistic goal from second-half substitute Wilfried Gohel who lobbed French international goalkeeper Fabien Barthez and his defenders on the hour with a clever left-footed effort.

Porto, meanwhile, slipped up over the weekend, dropping two points way to Campaunaiorense.

Benfica now face a Portuguese Cup semi-final against Sporting Braga on Tuesday with Souness — sacked by Italian second division side Torino earlier in the season — in an upbeat mood. "We have to be confident the way we are playing," he said.

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Director General
Mamoon Balqar

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Israeli, Palestinian negotiators meet in attempt to restart talks

JERICHO (R) — Senior Palestinian and Israeli negotiators met in the West Bank town of Jericho on Monday in a bid to restart negotiations on outstanding issues of the Israeli-PNA interim peace deal.

Palestinian officials said they hoped the apparent end of Iraq's stand-off with the United Nations would free world attention — more specifically that of main peace sponsor the United States — to work on Middle East peacemaking.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said nothing could take the place of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority and whatever they could agree together.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat and Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh told reporters after their meeting in

Jericho they would hold more talks on Tuesday evening with U.S. ambassador to Israel, Edward Walker, at his home in Tel Aviv.

"We will do our utmost to find ways to faithfully and precisely implement the signed agreements," Mr. Erekat said.

Nine joint Israeli-PNA interim committees have focused on meeting pledges made in a 1995 peace deal that include opening Gaza air and sea ports and a "safe passage" for Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza.

The Gaza airport has been built, but disputes over security have held up its opening.

"We both hope that we can achieve serious progress and fulfilment of both sides' obligations," Mr. Naveh said.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said in Gaza the appar-

ent end of Iraq's stand-off with the United Nations would boost efforts to resolve the 11-month-old impasse in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

"No doubt the stress on the peace process will be increased at all levels by all means," Mr. Arafat said.

Palestinian officials had complained the Iraqi crisis was drawing attention away from what they called Israel's foot-dragging on implementing peace agreements, and had dominated the attention of the United States, the main peace sponsor.

Under Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing leadership, Washington has played a far more prominent role brokering Israeli accords with the Palestinians than it did in negotiations under the centre-left governments of Yitzhak Rabin

and Shimon Peres.

But asked how he might cope with increased U.S. pressure now that Washington could turn its attention to peacemaking, Mr. Netanyahu said: "I believe there is no alternative to direct discussion between us and the Palestinian [National] Authority."

"In the end, no outside pressure of one kind or another will advance matters unless there is joint will, which certainly exists with us and I hope it exists also with the Palestinians, to make progress," he added.

Peace talks collapsed last March when Israel broke ground for a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem. Islamist suicide bombings and differences over the extent of an Israeli pullback have deepened the crisis.

Syria, Russia sign nuclear, tourism, economic accords

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria and Russia signed cooperation agreements Monday on nuclear power, tourism and economic measures, diplomats said.

The agreement on nuclear energy for peaceful means was signed by Ibrahim Osman, director of the Syrian atomic energy institute, and Russian Atomic Energy Minister Viktor Mikhailev.

The other agreements concern tourism, investments and double taxation.

No other details were provided on the agreements, which were signed at the end of the

first session of the Syrian-Russian technical and economic committee, created five years ago.

The committee session was opened Saturday in Damascus by Syrian Economy Minister Mohammad Imadi and Russian Justice Minister Sergei Stepashin.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad met Mr. Stepashin and Mr. Mikhailev here Sunday,

the president's spokesman said, adding that Mr. Assad said he was satisfied with the positive direction in Syrian-Russian cooperation. Economic cooperation

between the two countries has been hampered by Syria's debt to Russia of about \$10 billion resulting mainly from arms purchases by Damascus from the former Soviet Union.

In 1997, Syrian-Russian trade rose to \$200 million, including \$130 million in Syrian exports to Russia, which are mainly comprised of textiles.

A Russian parliamentary delegation led by Gennady Seleznev, speaker of the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, is expected here Tuesday night to meet Mr. Assad.

Israeli Labour Party to submit no-confidence motion over Iraq scare

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's Labour opposition will present a no-confidence motion against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu next week over his handling of preparations for a possible Iraqi attack, Israel Radio reported Monday.

Labour deputies accused the government of confusing citizens during the crisis by insisting they equip themselves with protective gear while at the same time saying the chances for an Iraqi attack were very slim.

"The government made the entire country feel endangered," Labour Deputy Yossi Beilin told Israel Radio.

"The view that Israel lost a war that never happened is not far from the truth," Mr. Beilin added. "The prime minister who always presented himself as Mr. Security has proved he is Mr. Lack of Security."

Meanwhile, Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai decided in a meeting with security chiefs to follow developments in Iraq and to continue defence preparations as necessary, Israel Radio said.

Press: Israel will insist on keeping 64% of W. Bank

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will insist on retaining 64 per cent of the West Bank until a final peace settlement with the Palestinians is reached, the Haaretz newspaper said Monday.

Haaretz said Mr. Netanyahu told an American visitor last week, "I won't give anything that leaves us with less than 64 per cent, because it affects our security. We need territory so we have something to trade in final status."

The Palestinians currently have full control over three per cent of the West Bank and partial control over 24 per cent. Under the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, Israel is supposed to make three unspecified further withdrawals from West Bank land by May 1998, before a final peace settlement.

The Palestinians say they expect to be in control of 90 per cent of the West Bank following those three withdrawals, none of which have been carried out.

But Mr. Netanyahu's statement would mean Israel would give up just nine per cent more of the West Bank in one pullout. His government has said it wants to keep at least 50 per cent of the West Bank in a final settlement as well.

The prime minister's office did not immediately return telephone calls from the Associated Press seeking comment.



THE MUSIC OF PEACE: Iraqi citizens celebrate an agreement reached by the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and the Iraqi government to avert a U.S.-led military strike against Iraq in Baghdad on Monday (See story on page 1) (Reuters photo)

Erbakan selects successor as Turkish Islamists regroup

ANKARA (AFP) — Banned Islamist party leader Necmettin Erbakan has hand-picked a moderate ally to lead Turkey's future Islamist movement as his successor, his aides said Monday.

Recai Kutan, a 68-year-old civil engineer and a former energy minister, will lead the new Islamist group to replace Mr. Erbakan's dissolved Welfare Party in the next six months, they told AFP.

Also, some 20 MPs from the defunct Welfare Party, whose constitutional court ordered closure took effect on Sunday, joined the Virtue Party, a political group recently set up by Erbakan aides.

Speaking to AFP, Mr. Kutan did not comment on his expected leadership, but said: "Our new movement will be a conservative one close to the centre, and will be free from extremist elements. Also religious elements will not be stressed."

He said Welfare leaders would meet on Wednesday to decide whether to keep the Virtue Party as Welfare's successor or to set up a new political group.

The Erbakan aides said Mr. Kutan would lead the new Islamist group in a transition period of some six months, after which the movement

would elect a permanent chief. "Younger politicians, like [Istanbul mayor] Recep Tayyip Erdogan and [Erbakan spokesman] Abdullah Gul would have higher chances for being elected then," one aide said.

But in the shorter term, Erbakan wants to keep Kutan — who has been with Erbakan for more than 30 years — leading the movement during transition," he added.

The constitutional court ruling of Jan. 16 banning Welfare came into effect when the verdict was published in Sunday's Official Gazette.

The ruling also bars party leader and former Turkish premier, Mr. Erbakan, 71, from politics after officially losing his seat in parliament.

The court had ruled that Welfare should be dissolved for undermining Turkey's secular regime — a major crime under the country's constitution.

Judicial sources said Mr. Erbakan, who lost his parliamentary immunity with his seat, could be charged with trying to overthrow Turkey's secular regime, and would face around 10 years in jail if found guilty.

The charges that led to Welfare's closure focused on remarks by Mr. Erbakan and

his aides calling for a "jihad", or Islamic holy war, and efforts by party officials to introduce some Islamic practices into daily life.

Mr. Erbakan became Turkey's first Islamist prime minister in June 1996 after forging a coalition government with a conservative party, but his one-year term was marred by major rows with the generals.

He was forced to step down under heavy military pressure in June last year and replaced by conservative Mesut Yilmaz who now heads a secular three-party coalition.

Welfare garnered 21 per cent of the vote in the December 1995 legislative elections and was the biggest party represented in parliament.

The Welfare verdict has prompted non-violent protests by Islamist groups in the last few weeks.

In a related development Monday, a Turkish prosecutor ordered the arrest of an Islamist ex-deputy for "anti-secular" remarks, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Sevki Yilmaz, a former Welfare member who was expelled by the party before the group's closure, has been accused of insulting Turkey's secular regime in several public speeches in recent years.

U.S., British peace activists welcome Iraq deal, urge end of sanctions

BAGHDAD (R) — A U.S.-British peace group on Monday welcomed a deal signed by Iraq and U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to defuse a crisis over arms inspections and urged an end to crippling U.N. trade sanctions.

"Voices in the wilderness welcomes the news that [Annan] and Iraq's President Saddam Hussein have reached an agreement to peacefully resolve the crisis over weapons inspection," the group said in a statement issued in Baghdad.

"During the past two weeks our delegation of peace activists from the U.S. and

Britain found ample evidence of the use of sanctions as a weapon of mass destruction," it said.

"We have been amazed by the emphasis ordinary people here have placed on sanctions rather than the threat of bombing," citing the plight of sick children it said had been denied medicines because of sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"They cannot import enough medicines, or have clean drinking water, or repair their sewage and sanitation systems, or even buy enough food to feed the population unless eco-

nomics sanctions are lifted," the statement said.

Voices in the Wilderness said sanctions were a crime against innocent Iraqi people and should be lifted now.

Under U.N. Security Council resolutions, Iraq must get a clean bill of health from the U.N. Special Commission charged with dismantling its chemical, biological, nuclear and long-range missile programmes before sanctions can be lifted. Medicines were excluded from the U.N. sanctions.

Greek minister slams Turkey-Israel ties as 'alliance of wrongdoers'

CAIRO (R) — Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos criticised Turkish-Israeli military ties on Monday and said they represented "an alliance of wrongdoers."

"Turkey's ties with Israel are not simply just for exercises as some people pretend," Mr. Pangalos told reporters in Cairo after meeting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

"We very well know that this is a strategic alliance and that it is the wrong kind for everybody. This is an alliance of wrongdoers that brings us to a cold war situation. It is not in keeping with contemporary times," he added.

Israel and Turkey held their

first joint naval exercises in the East Mediterranean in January. The United States also took part in the manoeuvres which are part of a 1996 military agreement between Turkey and the Jewish state.

Many Arab states, chiefly Egypt and Turkey's neighbour Syria, criticised the manoeuvres which Turkey and Israel said were only for search and rescue.

Mr. Pangalos, whose country has tense ties with fellow NATO-member Turkey, said he shared Arab fears that the exercises could be directed against a Mediterranean or Middle Eastern state.

"These exercises are not simply meant to save people

from the sea in an accident," he added.

Mr. Pangalos, who arrived in Egypt on Sunday on a three-day visit, said he discussed regional affairs and growing Egyptian-Greek military ties with Mr. Mubarak.

Mr. Pangalos is due to meet Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa on Monday for more talks on facilitating an Egyptian cooperation agreement with the European Union (EU).

The agreement is held up by EU tariff barriers on Egyptian farm produce, the area in which Cairo says it holds a comparative advantage.

EU to resume contacts with Iran

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) moved Monday to resume ministerial contacts with Iran, ending a 10-month freeze imposed after a German court implicated the Islamic regime in terrorism.

At talks here, foreign ministers from the 15 EU states agreed that they should "respond positively" to "encouraging" recent developments in Iran and the interest shown by Tehran in more constructive exchanges with the EU.

"As a first step, the council decided that official bilateral ministerial visits to or from Iran should be resumed," the

ministers said in a statement.

They also called for officials to develop proposals on how contacts between the EU as a bloc and Iran could be enhanced.

These contacts should be comprehensive and lead to a dialogue on issues including terrorism, the production of weapons of mass destruction, the death sentence imposed by Tehran on British writer Salman Rushdie and the Middle East peace process.

"Iran's willingness to address these concerns would greatly enhance the success of the dialogue and Iran's reintegration into the

international community."

The EU stance is bound to aggravate existing tensions with the United States over how to deal with Iran.

Washington has pursued a policy of isolating the regime and has enacted legislation which gives the U.S. courts the power to impose sanctions on European companies which invest in its energy sector.

The United States justifies this policy as a means of denying Iran the hard currency it needs to develop biological or chemical weapons.

Moss and Campbell huddle with Castro

HAVANA (AFP) — Carwalking Brits Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell huddled privately with President Fidel Castro Sunday, who admitted he was rather familiar with their work. The leggy twosomes, here for a magazine shoot, were continuing to collect world leaders with gusto last week, they chatted up South African President Nelson Mandela. But on Sunday it was Castro, Campbell, fresh from her close encounter with Fidel, gushed to reporters that the 71-year-old communist leader was "a source of inspiration to the world." An avid reader, Castro was familiar with their print work, the women said, but was surprised at how different they looked in the flesh.

Japan's crown prince thanks wife for cooking

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito, celebrating his 38th birthday Monday, thanked his wife for her cooking but made no mention of the hottest topic surrounding the couple — whether they will produce an heir. "It feels as though the years since our marriage have really flown by," the prince said of his diplomat-turned-wife, Princess Masako, in a previously recorded news conference released on his birthday. Naruhito said he was "grateful for my heart" for all Masako had done, both as crown princess and as his wife during their five-year marriage. "Somehow she manages to find time in her busy schedule of official duties to cook for me and it is really delicious," he said.

Candidate threatens political rivals with divine punishment

BACOLOD (AFP) — A faith healer running for governor of a central Philippine province told his political rivals on they would face divine retribution if they insist on running against him. German Valladarez, who claims to be a faith healer and prophet, said God had revealed to him that anyone else who stands for governor of Negros Occidental province in May 11 elections would meet an accident and die. "Persons who violated this revelation... running against the will of God Almighty Elhoy Yahweh El Shaddai... they shall be put to accident and shall die," Valladarez said. Also standing are the incumbent governor and a former television variety show host.

German finance minister's teddy bear fetches \$665

NUREMBERG (AFP) — German Finance Minister Theo Waigel's teddy bear fetched \$665 Sunday at an auction in this south German town for child war victims. The teddy, visibly scarred by Waigel long before he rose to his elevated position, is a relic of the 1930s.

Pigeons to carry election messages in India state

NEW DELHI (R) — Election officials in the eastern province of Orissa kept carrier pigeons ready to take urgent messages as India held the second phase of general elections on Sunday. Wireless services and telephones have still not reached some remote areas, where pigeons are used, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. "The trained birds of the Orissa Police Pigeon Service, the only one of its kind in the country, might carry election messages and information regarding law and order," it said. The news agency said the pigeon service was launched in 1946 with birds taken from the army after World War Two.

Indian polls death toll passes 55

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Seven more people died in India Monday as the death toll during continuing national elections passed 55.

Unidentified gunmen shot dead two people Monday during balloting in a north-eastern state, while five paramilitary personnel died in a landmine blast in the south while returning from polling duties.

India's four-phase national elections began on Feb. 16 and end on March 7.

About 30 deaths were recorded across the country on the opening day, with 20 more during the second phase on Feb. 22. The next legs are due on Feb. 28 and March 7.

There have also been widespread reports of voter intimidation and ballot box fraud. Around 3,000 polling centres have so far been ordered to organise new polls after the first leg.

Most of the deaths, caused by clashes between rival groups, were reported in Bihar, an eastern state regarded as India's most lawless province.

Many victims have also died at the hands of separatist groups or left-wing revolutionaries opposed to the polls.

Indian court orders restoration of nationalist government

NEW DELHI (AFP) — An Indian court Monday ordered the restoration of a Hindu nationalist state government sacked two days ago after losing its majority, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

The directive was given to authorities in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh by the Allahabad High Court, the news agency said.

The court "left it open to the [Uttar Pradesh] governor to convene a session of the state legislative assembly to prove its majority," PTI added. The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), which had launched a legal challenge after the sacking, welcomed the judgement, saying it had been "vindicated."

Uttar Pradesh Governor Ramesh Bhandari late Saturday sacked the BJP state government after it lost its majority. An alternative government, made up of opposition parties, was sworn in its place. The BJP protested strongly, arguing it should have been allowed to try to prove its majority before being dismissed.

BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee, the party's candidate to become prime minister in ongoing national elections, launched a hunger strike in protest.

The country's election commission, however, responsible for the running of fair polls, has claimed that the death toll has been inflated. It argues that some deaths not connected to the elections have been included.

The commission has pointed out that India, with a voting population of 600 million, is

the world's largest democracy. It also stressed hundreds of thousands of polling booths had been involved in voting, with barely one per cent complaining of trouble.

The recorded fatalities, however, do not include around 100 other deaths in the run-up to the elections.